THE FRANCISCAN POETS

FREDERICK
OZANAM

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THE FRANCISCAN POETS

ST. FRANCIS.

BY TIBERIO D'ASSISI.

THE FRANCISCAN POETS IN ITALY OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

BY

FREDERICK OZANAM

TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY

A. E. NELLEN AND N. C. CRAIG

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By permission of Mr. Fisher Unwin

THANKS are due to Mr. J. Slingsby Roberts for his translation of "The Canticle of the Sun" by St. Francis of Assisi, and of "The Ode to St. Clare" by Jacopone da Todi.

INTRODUCTION

FREDERICK OZANAM was born in the year 1813 and died in the year 1853, and his centenary has therefore just been celebrated in the year 1913. This, his chief literary work, which, to quote an eminent Catholic writer, "remains to this day one of the indispensable authorities for the history of literature, of Catholicism, and of Italy," will now appeal to a larger public in England; for, though all those who have striven to bring to light the hidden truths of Franciscan literature—whether in Germany, France, or Italy—have given unquestioning testimony to the pre-eminence of Frederick Ozanam as an authority on the subject, no English translation of his inspiring and illuminating work has yet been attempted. No other book reproduces so sincerely and truly the spirit of the Franciscan movement, with all the glow of its religious ecstasy and all the charm of its innocent simplicity; no other book expounds so clearly

the gradual evolution of that spirit, or testifies so convincingly to its influence on all aspects of human life and art. He shows it to us as a stream issuing from the bed-rock of religion, in the sacred art of the primitive Christian Church, and flowing on in a steadily widening channel through the earliest beginnings of that literature which was to have a universal appeal and gain a lasting hold on the mind of the poor and unlettered, no less than on that of the rich and cultured.

He traces its smooth and even flow with great care and precision, but he contemplates with special reverence certain landmarks in its course. To Ozanam we are indebted for the discovery of the importance of Jacopone —that Laureate of Folly—who was content to win for himself scorn and derision, and to be judged a fool in the eyes of the world in order to win wisdom in the sight of God. As the author of that most tender and melodious sacred lyric, the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*, his name will be handed down to posterity, but the universal and lasting appeal of that inimitable hymn demands a wider knowledge of its author and his poetical career. He has left us many other priceless gems which are all

too little known, among them the companion poem of the *Stabat* of the Cross—the *Stabat Mater Speciosa* of the Cradle—which latter was buried in such obscurity that Ozanam believed himself to have been the first to reprint it. These poems reveal him as a poet obsessed by the frenzy of mystic love, by the ecstasy of spiritual passion, by his dauntless ardour as the champion of saintly poverty and the highest good, by his burning hatred as the denouncer of hypocrisy and insincerity—in a word, as a poet inspired with the divine afflatus. Brought up in a country where Nature speaks with the voice of mystic harmony and beauty, it is no marvel that something of her spirit should have descended upon the poet nurtured under her influence. Todi is situated on the brow of a majestic hill which towers above the sweet Umbrian plain. From her throne she looks down upon a landscape which for mysterious and unsullied beauty is surely unrivalled. As far as the eye can see stretches a vista of corn-fields, vineyards, and waysides clothed with the flame of flowers. Here and there may be seen the gleaming water of the river Tiber as it winds slowly, like a silver thread

through the valley, and here and there the eye lights upon groups of grey mystic olives and on solitary cypresses. What greater contrast could be conceived than that between the happy, laughing plain and the grim, rugged, and menacing walls of the silent town which crowns the height overlooking the valley! There stands, in all the dignity of age and antiquity, all the strength of endurance and fortitude, the little town, unknown to the hurried tourist, yet famous with "the fame that waits and watches and is wise," and in the far distance stand out on the horizon the great snow-capped Apennines "like the immaculate memorials of angels slain in the fight with Lucifer thousands of years ago."

Those very contrasts of menacing austerity, silent enduring strength, and happy innocence, among which the child Jacopone grew up, were indelibly impressed on his character, though not brought to the surface till the moment of his conversion from a life of worldly luxury and pleasure to a life of saintly poverty and religious asceticism. It was the tragic death of his beautiful young wife which brought the saint in him to light.

These contrasts are also remarkably reflected

in his poetry. His bold and almost brutally austere satires, in which he lashes so mercilessly the vices of the people, recall the grimness of the battlemented town; his tender, charming, innocent lauds, in which he voices his passionate love for the Virgin and the Christ-Child, were the product of his intercourse with nature and the peasants in the happy smiling valley below the town; his longer odes, in which he writes with the open vision of the inspired mystic, of the emotions and ideals which rule for all time, suggest inevitably the eternal background of the mystic age-old mountains.

Each class offers us priceless jewels which have been buried all too long beneath the dust of oblivion, but his genius remains by no means consistently at the same exalted level, and he has left us many rough, unpolished diamonds—poems in which he speaks his message in so homely a way that he quits the region of poetry altogether and descends to the level of rough, rhyming narrative. But his very defects as a poet, no less than his merits, spring from his deep sincerity. He did not aim at artistic effects, but merely desired to proclaim in a voice understanded of the

people his own newly found wisdom. His art is still in a primitive state of development and he often proceeds without tact or discrimination, but he is ever the troubadour of God. His claim to greatness rests pre-eminently on his passionate utterances of glowing mysticism, and his poems have been well described by Diepenbrock as "a wonderful garden of mystic poesy in which the singer leads us from the first struggles of conversion, by devious paths, to the inner paths of purity, revelation, and unity."

And this genius, filled with the madness of poetic frenzy, is only one of a race of giants whom Ozanam groups round St. Francis—the tallest, greatest, and most beautiful of the race. Each in turn he treats with the same sympathetic appreciation, if not with the same detailed estimation as he expresses for the Blessed Jacopone, whose greatness was in a measure his own discovery.

AMY E. NELLEN.

The Franciscan Poets in Italy in the Thirteenth Century

CHAPTER I

POPULAR POETRY IN ITALY BEFORE AND AFTER ST. FRANCIS

BEFORE studying the Franciscan school it is well to estimate its place in the history of Italian poetry. It is essential to understand the chief characteristic of this poetry, to watch it emerge from the obscurity of the preceding ages; then, when established by the example of St. Francis and his followers, to see it passed on to less religious schools and perpetuating itself in less simple centuries. But the characteristic of the Italian genius which impresses us most is that, while it became more cultured, it remained popular, and that in all periods Italian literature has

been the voice of the people. The finest flower of Italian poetry had its roots in the sentiments of the populace, and, having blossomed, it returned to the same inexhaustible source of inspiration for its later growth. I propose to sound its depths and trace it to its earliest beginnings.

The Italian genius developed in the atmosphere of the catacombs. We must descend there to discover the source of all that was destined to become so great. There, in those primitive ages, lived a people in the modern sense of the word, comprising women and children, the weak and the small, such as ancient historians despise and hold of no account—a new people, a medley of strangers, slaves, free-men, barbarians, all animated by a spirit alien to antiquity and suggestive of a new order of things. This society had an ideal which it was eager to express, but the ideal was too comprehensive, too impassioned, too new, to find adequate expression in words; it required the service of all the arts. In that early stage of its development, poetry was not yet clear, precise, or clothed in the garb which it needed. But it animated all the arts, architecture, painting, sculpture, en-

graving, for all these are symbolic and are characterised by figurative expression and the endeavour to make the image reflect the idea, to reveal the ideal in the real.

We must imagine the catacombs as a network of long, underground corridors, stretching in all directions beneath the suburbs and the outskirts of Rome. We must beware of confusing them with the spacious quarries dug out for the purpose of building the pagan city. The Christians themselves excavated the narrow corridors which were to hide the mysteries of their faith and to be the resting-place of their tombs. These labyrinths are sometimes as much as three or four stories high and they penetrate to a depth of eighty to a hundred feet below ground, but in many parts they are so narrow and low that it is difficult to make one's way through even with lowered head. To the right and left are several rows of broad, deep trenches scooped out of the wall, in which bodies of men, women, and children are placed side by side and covered with a little lime. As if to confuse the pagan searchers, the underground passage makes a thousand detours, and to this day these very detours

speak of the horrors of those early days of persecution when the cruel hunter chased his prey through these winding labyrinths. For this very purpose of persecution the corridor was made to wind, to ascend and descend, and to bury itself in the lowest depths of the earth. But though a work born of cruelty and horror, it is at the same time an eloquent work. No building raised by human hands teaches nobler lessons. In those murky passages the visible world and all trace of light is denied to all who penetrate those depths. The cemetery encloses all the hidden treasures of darkness, even as eternity "concludes and shuts up" all time, and the oratories, built at various points for the celebration of the holy mysteries, are like so much daylight breaking in upon immortality to comfort the souls for the night here below.

These oratories are covered with pictures which are often crudely executed and which are clearly the work of unskilled hands. Those ignorant workmen could do no better, working in haste and by the light of a lamp, in fear, and threatened with death. Yet often when the light of a torch is thrown upon the sacred walls, images are revealed whose design, form,

and movement recall the best traditions of ancient art. At the same time, behind these very traditions lurks the principle which was destined to reanimate and transform them. The true faith of the martyrs is depicted in the expression of these beings whom the artist represents with eyes raised to heaven and hands outstretched in prayer. But in all, the intrusion of Christian art is revealed in the ideal which chose the subjects of these pictures, which planned the order of them and designed the types. In these desolate places, where images expressive of a society banned, persecuted, and mercilessly tracked might well be expected, are discovered instead those revealing a very different spirit. At the entrance of the vault appears the Good Shepherd bearing on His shoulders a lamb and a goat, indicating that He saves both the innocent and the repentant. Next, in four panels decorated with garlands of flowers and fruits, are depicted stories drawn from the Old and New Testaments, generally arranged in couples, as if to suggest allegory and reality, prophecy and history. In these figure Noah in the Ark, Moses striking the rock, Job on the dunghill, the Miracle of

Cana, the feeding of the five thousand, Lazarus leaving the tomb, and most prominent—Daniel in the lions' den, Jonah cast out by the whale, the three Children in the furnace. All these are types of martyrdom—martyrdom by beasts, water, and fire, but all symbolical of triumphant martyrdom such as is necessary to depict in order to maintain courage and console grief. We see no trace of contemporary persecutions, no representation of the butchery of the Christians, nothing bloodthirsty, nothing which could rouse hatred or vengeance, nothing but pictures of pardon, hope, and love.

Though the Christians of the catacombs found time to paint their chapels, they were zealous never to abandon the tombs of their dead without endowing them with some token of remembrance, some trace of their grief and reverence. Christian sculpture had its beginning in such hieroglyphics, and figures roughly hewn, without proportion, without grace, with no other worth than the ideal they represent. A leaf expresses the instability of life; a sailing boat, the fleeting of our days; the dove bearing the branch proclaims the dawn of a better world; the fish recalls baptism, and, at the same time, the

Greek word which translates it unites in a mysterious anagram the majestic titles of the Son of God, the Saviour. On a nameless tomb there is a fish and the five miraculous loaves of bread, suggesting that here rests a man who believed in Christ, who was regenerated by baptism, and who partook of the Eucharistic feast. As paganism gradually declined, the chisel of the Christian became bold and more productive. Instead of those indefinite emblems which he outlined on brick, he boldly cut the marble and produced the bas-reliefs of his sarcophagi which decorate the museums of Rome and the churches of Ravenna. In them we meet again the biblical subjects already treated in the catacombs, but other scenes are added. The richer and more definite symbolism announces that the time of the persecutions was over, and that the holy mysteries needed no longer to be celebrated in secret.

The tombs of Ravenna do not speak of death; everything there suggests the immortality given by the Eucharist to Christians: for instance, birds pecking at vines, doves drinking from a chalice, tender lambs feeding on the fruits of a palm.

But the designer, despairing of expressing his thought adequately in sculpture, had called speech to his aid, though at first it took a secondary place. The first inscriptions are of a brevity which has its own eloquence. "This is the place of Philemon." Some are amplified by means of tender and comforting expressions such as "*Florentius felix agneglus* (*sic*) *Dei*"—"Florentius, happy little lamb of God." Or yet again, "You have fallen too soon, Constantia, miracle of beauty and wisdom"—"*Nimium cito decidisti, Constantia, mirum pulchritudinis atque idonitati*" (*sic*). And yet Constance had died as a martyr, and the phial stained with blood marked out her tomb for the veneration of the faithful. But the young saint was only eighteen, and the Church forgave the cry of the parents' hearts. Sometimes these few words suggest all the terror of divine judgment, as do those in the following prayer which the Christian Benirosus had traced on his father's tomb: "Lord, take thou not us unawares when our mind is shrouded in darkness"—"*Domine, ne quando adumbretur spiritus, veneris.*" At another time the thought of the Resurrection breaks forth in

the midst of lamentation and weeping. The family of the Christian Severianus invokes on his behalf Him who causes the seeds buried in the furrow to germinate:

> "Vivere qui praestat morientia semina terrae,
> Solvere qui potuit lethalia vincula mortis!"

At this period was produced the only poetry truly worthy of the name—poetry expressed in language and metre. The muse could no longer be silent, for the time was approaching when the poet Prudentius was to celebrate the catacombs and their martyrs in the metres of Virgil and Horace. But till now poetry had happily remained popular and crude. It is surely indisputable that ignorant people traced these Latin inscriptions written in Greek characters and bristling with faults of orthography, language, and prosody, and the picture of the plebeian mothers, the slave-fathers, engraving stealthily their griefs and hopes on the stone before which they knelt in reverence, may be readily imagined. When the persecutors, the true Romans, descended into these cemeteries they must have laughed contemptuously and shrugged their shoulders at

the epitaphs of these poor wretches who knew not how to write and yet claimed to teach the world. And truly that is what they were destined to do. The ancient Roman civilisation was declining to its fall, and at that very moment Rome was to see emerge from these subterranean passages with which she was undermined, from that Christian society which she had regarded as her enemy, a whole civilisation and, subsequently, an entirely new poesy.

While the walls of the Eternal City were trembling beneath the battering-rams, and the Goths and the Vandals were entering through the breach, while the barbarians were carrying off even the leaden roofings and gates of brass, just when it seemed that all was lost, the sacred tombs of the catacombs upheaved the ground, so to speak, and thus formed the foundation of those wonderful basilicas of St. Paul and of St. Mary the Greater, and so many others which, from the fourth to the thirteenth century, were to revive, unite, and preserve all the arts. Instead of the poesy of the schools, there was a poesy of the monuments.

It is difficult to realise fully the true

significance of a Christian basilica of barbaric times, when there was no other civilisation than that within its walls. Firstly, since the ancient society was decaying, it was essential for the basilica to fashion a new society; it was imperative that the only place in which men were united, in striving after a moral ideal, should accustom them to order and rule, so that they might go forth obedient and disciplined. For this reason the Church had her two courts which separated her from the tumult without, and her fountain in which soiled hands were cleansed; lastly, her divisions corresponding to the degrees of the Catholic hierarchy, from the vestibule where the penitents mourned to the naves dividing the men from the women, and the apse where the stalls of the priests surrounded the bishop seated on his marble throne. Soon the Church was to expand, and she was to be enriched by the baptistery, the cemetery, and the belfry; she was to include within her walls all that furthered the spiritual life of the people. Take for example Pisa and that wonderful plot of ground which contains the cathedral, the campanile, the baptistery, and the Campo Santo; it satisfied

all the needs of birth, life, and death. It is obvious that basilicas have produced cities.

In the second place, the light of science and art was threatened with extinction, hence the basilica had to supply within its walls an education for the people, capable of illuminating the mind and inspiring the imagination. It was necessary that men should go forth instructed and well satisfied, that they should return there with joy—as to a place where they found truth and beauty. In order to satisfy the ideal of that age, a Church had to contain a complete theology and a complete sacred poem. Such was the aim of those who covered with mosaics not only the churches of Rome and Ravenna, but those of Milan, Venice, Capua, and Palermo; and not only the apse of their buildings, but often also the naves, the vestibule, and the frontal with the history of both Testaments amplified by the legends of the saints and crowned by the visions of the Apocalypse. Usually the image of celestial glory filled the hemicycle of the sanctuary. Nothing can equal the effect of that noble figure of Christ which stands out prominently on a background of gold, standing in the midst of an encircling heaven, having

on His left and right saints who offer up their crowns to Him. Below may be seen the Lamb resting on the mountain from which issue the four streams, symbolical of the Four Evangelists. Twelve sheep emerge from the two towns of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, to typify the Christian host recruiting in the Synagogue and among the Gentiles. Finally, amid the details which ornament these rich works of art, appear stags and doves, lilies and palms, all the symbols of Christian antiquity which have been preserved and interpreted by an uninterrupted tradition. And, to show in a striking manner that it was not intended to be a source of secret instruction reserved for the initiated, but to give to all the key of these illuminating pictures, they were accompanied by inscriptions. Beneath each mosaic could be read verses which explained its meaning, which pointed a lesson, which sought to move the spectator, and to draw from him a tear or a prayer. These grand and austere walls, these Roman churches became like so many pages in which were celebrated the miracles of the saints, the princely founders of the basilica, and the famous dead sleeping beneath its roof.

Thus arose a species of poetry to which the critics have not described sufficient importance, a mural poetry, so to speak, which inspired the Italian churches of the Middle Ages, in the same way as in an earlier age a sacred art had covered the temples of Egypt with paintings and hieroglyphics. At St. John Lateran, the doorway, the apse, and even the papal throne are inscribed with verses, These are written in a simple but vivid style and proclaim the rights of the apostolic chair and of the Mother-Church. At St. Peter's the epitaphs of the popes contain in themselves the whole history of the papacy. The names, dates, and deeds of the contemporary popes of the sixth and seventh century are most prominently engraved in Latin distiches. The number and merit of these little poems testify to the continuity of literary studies in an age in which it is customary to represent Rome as the whore of Babylon, abandoned to ignorance and vice. The cathedral of Pisa proudly raised her frontal scored by triumphant inscriptions. They record how the Pisans wrested from the infidels, by force in the first crusade, Sardinia and the Balearic Isles, and gave special prominence to their victorious

expedition against the Saracens of Palermo, in memory of which, and of the spoil which they carried away, these pious sea-rovers built their cathedral. But nowhere have the memories of that great epoch been more completely preserved than in St. Mark's at Venice, and that not in its cupolas, its imposing façade adorned with gold and sculpture. Let us enter beneath its gilded arches and try to reconstruct the cycle of mosaics and inscriptions which is there revealed.

The porch is suitably adorned with scenes from the Old Testament prophetic of the New. There is portrayed the history of the people of God, beginning with Genesis and ending, on the one side, with Moses baptizing the Hebrews in the Red Sea, and on the other, with John baptizing in the Jordan. These images date from an age of ignorance, and yet they are a source of inspiration whose grace and grandeur modern art has not surpassed. Thus, for example, one represents God creating light. Instead of an angry old man coercing chaos, the mosaic-artist has represented the Word "which was in the beginning," young with an eternal youth,

clothed in two royal colours, white and purple, perfectly calm, stretching forth over the elements a hand confident of obedience. Before Him are two globes, the one dark, the other light. Between the two globes, an angel, symbolic of the first day, stretches his wings and takes flight. But these paintings of the infant world form but the introduction to the scene in the interior of the basilica. The presence of Christ the Redeemer fills every part, beginning with the cupola of the sanctuary, where, surrounded by prophets, He figures as the Desire of the nations. In the choir, the triforia, and the central nave, are depicted His life, miracles, and His passion, down to the last Judgment, a menacing representation of which stands out clearly above the principal door. The side naves are devoted to the story of the Holy Virgin, the Apostles, and the two patron saints of the place, St. Mark and St. Clement, not to mention the innumerable saints whose figures, standing out from backgrounds of gold, fill the church and make it like a visible paradise, like a heavenly Jerusalem brought down to earth and retained there by the genius and piety of men. The explanation of these

mosaics has required a poem of two hundred verses. In part it is the record of a miracle, in part the interpretation of a symbol, sometimes a judgment or a prayer. Doubtless these primitive hexameters often violate the laws of syntax and prosody, but religious fervour animates them, they reflect heroic patriotism, the priestly and warlike spirit of the century which dared to set on piles, in the midst of the sea, those cupolas which rival those of St. Sophia. Round the great arch of the choir may be read this invocation to the patron saint of the city: "Mark, do thou protect Italy with thy doctrine, Africa with thy tomb, Venice with thy presence and, like a lion, shield them with thy roaring" —"*Italiam, Libyam, Venetos, sicut leo, Marce, Doctrina, tumulo, requie fremituque tueris.*" At other times the poet intended the holy walls to act as warnings to the great ones of the earth. When the doge, descending from his palace, entered the church and passed before the altar of St. Clement, he could read these words graven in letters of gold, on a marble less corruptible than the heart of his courtesans: "Love justice, render to all men that which is their due. O doge! may the

poor and the widow, the ward and the orphan, trust to you as their defender! Let neither fear nor hate, passion nor gold, cause you to waver! O doge! you will wither as a flower, you will turn to dust, and according to your works will you be rewarded after death."

"Ut flos casurus, dux, es cineresque futurus,
Et velut acturus, post mortem sic habiturus."

In a word, the humble and ignorant are not forgotten. It is especially for them that the inscription was added to the picture, and for fear lest, carried away by the splendour of the pictures, the majority of minds should fail to soar to the invisible truths, beneath a figure of the Saviour were written these words: "The image represents God, but the image is not God. Reverence it, but in your thought worship what it suggests to you."

"Nam Deus est quod imago docet: sed non est Deus ipsa.
Hanc videas, sed mente colas quod noscis in ipsa."

In this way Christian art rejected the allurements which paganism had loved to practise on the eyes of the multitude. But after these restraints of a rigid orthodoxy, it

can be readily understood how the people who had built St. Mark's, and were enraptured with their work and dazzled by the gold and the rich colours, claimed that their temple would be the king of Christian buildings.

"Historiis, auro, forma specie tabularum
Hoc templum Marci fore (*sic*) decus ecclesiarum."

Time and space do not permit the enumeration of further instances. But when the inscriptions are so numerous that they overlap, and are attached to all pictures, bas-reliefs, and architectural designs ordained to captivate the imaginations of men, it may be said without exaggeration that a cathedral is a book, a poem, and that Christianity fulfilling her promise has drawn from stone lamentations and songs: "Lapides clamabunt."

This poesy of the monuments was written in Latin. However, it must not be thought that the Latin inscriptions were composed by scholars and for scholars, that they were addressed to the cultured classes—that is to say, to the minority. Everything in them appeals to the people: the sentiments expressed, the irregular form chosen, the rhyme

adopted. In the eleventh century, in the twelfth, even in the thirteenth, the Latin tongue was still intelligible in Italy, not merely to the lettered but to all classes. Latin was the language used for preaching, for oratory, and for war-songs. In 934 the people of Modena, threatened by the invasion of the Hungarians, were keeping watch on their walls. These artisans and citizens who had armed in haste for the defence of their homes, and who had already seen the neighbouring villages burning, gained inspiration by repeating a battle-hymn which still lives and which is written in correct Latin. It preserves all the characteristics of the classic epic, while at the same time it adopts a modern metre:

"O thou who hast protected these walls with thine arms,
Slumber not, I counsel thee, but be vigilant.
So long as the watchful Hector lived in Troy,
It was guarded from the wiles of the Greeks."

"O tu qui servas armis ista moenia,
Noli dormire, quaeso; sed vigila!
Dum Hector vigil extitit in Troja
Non eam cepit fraudulenta Graecia."

At that time poetry was sung and was

constantly on the lips of the people, not only in the churches where the hymns of St. Ambrose and of St. Gregory resounded, but in the camp, in the public squares, and even beneath the balcony of noble ladies charmed to hear their praises sung in the language of Horace or Virgil. Examples of such poems are very numerous, as also are drinking songs and political satires. Let us pause at a poem of some length which reveals, perhaps more clearly than any other, the Italian genius with its characteristic merits and defects. The Pisan fleet had just waged war on the shores of Africa in 1088. It returned laden with the spoils of the Saracens. An unknown poet celebrated this action in a song essentially popular. The rhymed lines no longer preserve any trace of classical prosody, yet they are full of the traditions of antiquity. Taken literally, the first words of the author insinuate that Pisa was about to revive the ancient quarrel between Rome and Carthage:

"Nam extendit modo Pisa laudem admirabilem,
Quam olim recepit Roma vincendo Carthaginem."

Allegorically it represents a holy war. Christ Himself steers the ships; and when

the Christians disembark on the African coast, St. Peter the Apostle guides them, and St. Michael blows the trumpet before them. The poet describes the fortunes of the combat. He numbers the dead, laments the young Hugo Visconti, the bravest and most handsome of their leaders, whose blood was the price of the Pisan victory. And to honour this hero duly, he compares him with Codrus, "that famous king who sought death to ensure the victory of his followers." It is true that he immediately adds other words, in which reflect all the faith of the Middle Ages: "Thus hell was despoiled, and Satan's empire destroyed, when Jesus the Redeemer voluntarily yielded Himself to death. For love of Him and in His service thou diest, O well-beloved! and we shall see thee at the last judgment radiant as a noble martyr."

"Pro cujus amore, care, et cujus servitio
Martyr pulcher rutilabis venturo judicio."

These lines, written even before the end of the eleventh century, show that confusion of the sacred and profane for which Dante, Tasso, and all the Italian poets have been so often condemned. It is not however the

pedantry of the writer which is at fault, nor the paganism of the Renaissance, but it is Italy who will yield none of her traditions and is ever jealous of her classic glories and her Christian triumphs. There is scarcely one of those old Italian cities which does not claim to have within her walls the bones of a saint and those of a hero or a poet. Naples shows the tombs of St. Januarius and of Virgil. Although Padua had raised a magnificent monument to St. Anthony, yet she reverently preserved the stone which was believed to be the tomb of Antenor. Siena, the city of saints, proudly retained her title of a Roman colony, and over the porch of her cathedral a column bears the figure of the wolf and the twin boys. This cult of the past was carried to excess, but the motive which inspired it was a worthy one. The men of the Middle Ages believed that the source of noble actions lies in noble memorials.

However, all the poetry of the memorials and all the war-songs and religious monuments were only tentative efforts. They had not yet discovered a fitting means of expression, while they continued to adopt the Latin tongue, intelligible but antiquated, and powerless to

express varied and new emotions. A fable tells how the infant Mercury, when playing by the seashore, picked up on the sands a tortoise shell which he converted into the first lyre. In like manner, the Italian genius, still in its infancy and the offspring of the people, was to take, as it were, from the dust at its feet the humble idiom, destined to become an immortal instrument.

For a long time each province and each city had had its own dialect. The Lombard League bound together the cities, the provinces had intercourse one with another, and from the united dialects an idiom was evolved which was used by the court, for ceremonies and public feasts, and which then became national. This change took place in the second half of the twelfth century. At the beginning of the thirteenth, St. Francis appeared, and he, with his devotion to the poor, would sing only in the idiom of the people. He improvised in Italian his Canticle of the Sun, and that early utterance reawoke echoes which were never again to be silenced. A Franciscan monk of Verona, Fra Giacomino, wrote in Venetian dialect two little poems, one on Hell, the other on Paradise,

thus opening up for the author of the *Divine Comedy* the paths of eternity. Another religious, Jacopone da Todi, wandered among the mountains of Umbria, composing in the primitive dialect of the district, not only simple lyrics, but also lengthy poems. In these he expounded the mystic theology of St. Bonaventura with all the severity of a vindictive satire, which spared neither the corruption of the people nor the vices of the Church. This bold man was as daring as Dante; he preceded him, and probably inspired him.

Such were the examples which paved the way for Dante. He found in their pages the countless visions of the invisible world characteristic of the Italian legends. He had the happy inspiration to deal boldly with this popular subject in the vernacular tongue. He deserves full praise for this, for the temptation to use Latin was naturally strong. Obsessed by the beauties of the *Aeneid*, which he knew by heart, he had planned to write his poem in the language and in the metre of Virgil, and he began in these terms:

"Ultima regna canam fluido contermina mundo."

But as he gradually progressed in his work

and advanced in years, a profound contempt grew upon him for the scholars of his time, who sold themselves to princes and who used the lyre for mercenary ends. He refused to write for them, and declared in favour of the vulgar tongue, since he owed to it two births, temporal and spiritual; "for that it was," said he, "which brought my parents together, which introduced me to the study of Latin, and afterwards to the other branches of human knowledge."

"To the eternal shame of those who depreciate their own tongue and vaunt that of others," Dante celebrates the Italian language with ardent passion, "because of the sweetness of its syllables, the aptness of its constructions, the ease with which it expresses almost as perfectly as Latin the loftiest and most original thoughts, so that on examining it the more closely a very sweet and pleasing charm is revealed." Such is the sentiment which he expresses in his book of the *Convito;* and it is perhaps the most striking trait of his genius that he took up the cudgels on behalf of a despised idiom, abandoned to the ignorant and poor; not that he created it, as has been said, but he established it by an eternal

monument in spite of the indifference and the ill-will of contemporary scholars.

A professor of the University of Bologna, Giovanni del Virgilio, addressed to him long Latin epistles, exhorting him to choose subjects worthier of his muse among the Grecian legends—such as the "Rape of Ganymede." He reproached him for writing for the contemptible populace, for neglecting the scholars, those learned men who pored over ancient books, but who zealously refrained from opening the *Divine Comedy* for fear of spoiling their Latin.

> "Tanta quid heu semper jactabis seria vulgo? . . .
> Et nos pallentes nihil ex te vate legemus!"

Dante replies to him in Latin verse, in verse sufficiently laden with allusions, allegories, and metaphors to ensure that in respect of pedantry and ambiguity he can challenge at need the most learned of his day. But he confesses that his sole ambition is to finish the popular work which has cost him so much midnight toil, and then to go, book in hand, to knock at the doors of his country. He hopes that they will open to him, and that it will be granted him, as he says else-

where, to receive, from within, the poetic crown even as in times past he had received the rite of holy baptism:

> "Ritorneró poeta, 'e in sul fonte
> Del mio battesmo, prenderó 'l capello!"

He returned indeed to his ungrateful Florence, but he returned after his death, crowned, not with the laurel which withers, but with the thorny crown of the exile and the aureole of immortality. Labourers sang his verses, Boccaccio expounded them, just as Virgil was expounded, from a chair founded by the Florentine republic. The painter Michelino was commissioned to paint the figure of the poet in the magnificent cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore. Dante figures in it in the robe of a doctor, pointing to the three invisible kingdoms which are stretched before him. By one of those faults of perspective which are so common in ancient art, and which sometimes have point and significance, his native town is represented as being quite minute at his feet while he himself towers above the steeples and turrets.

But at the moment when sacred poetry had a new birth in the hymns of St. Francis and

his followers, the poetry of romance also had its rise. In the thirteenth century the Italian cities, in the first pride of victory and liberty, wished to maintain full court, as the emperors whom they conquered had done; Padua, Treviso, Venice, Genoa, Florence held solemn feasts. There assembled all those whose profession was to provide entertainment: musicians, jongleurs, extemporisers. They recited in the public squares those metrical romances which went the round of Europe, those historical romances of the Round Table and of the Knights of Charlemagne. Albertino Mussato testifies that about the year 1320 actors presented the deeds of Roland and Oliver in the theatres. These two paladins were so popular that they figure in sculpture on the right and left of the door of the cathedral at Verona, standing erect with sword in hand, and, so that there should be no mistake, the artist has engraved on the sword of Roland the name of Durindana, that same famous sword which achieved such great feats in the Pyrenees. About the same time, the Italian historians began to record the *Reali di Francia*—the epic cycle of the royal house of France, which tells how Constantine

had a son Clovis, and, later, Charlemagne as recognised heir; and also relates the exploits of Bevis of Hampton and of Gisbert of the proud face. This is the source from which the poets of the two following centuries, the Altissimo, Pulci, Boiardo, the forerunners of Ariosto and of Tasso, were to draw. These two great men are assuredly learned poets; they have an intimate knowledge of antiquity, but though inspired by it they are not slavish imitators. When the Greeks who escaped from the downfall of Constantinople set up with so much zeal the classical altars, in the very midst of the literary paganism which ensnared so many noble minds; when so much scorn was poured upon the vernacular tongue that baptismal names were changed for Roman, at that crisis Ariosto and Tasso were wise enough to follow the example of Dante, to write in the language of women, of warriors, and of the people, poems which were not only to be read but also to be sung. Moreover this people, upon whom they had lavished their genius, showered glory upon them in return. They showed themselves grateful, not only at the time when a band of brigands fell at the feet of Ariosto, or

when an immense multitude accompanied the remains of Tasso tardily crowned with laurel through the streets of Rome; they preserved a remembrance of them which still endures, and is mingled with respect and love. At Naples, the singer of the jetty continues to chant daily the stanzas of Orlando Furioso to the harbourmen who listen to him as they eat their frugal meal of nuts. In the outskirts of Pisa, there are villages where every year the patronal festival is celebrated by a dramatic representation of *Jerusalem Delivered*, just as the *Iliad* used to be represented in the theatre of Athens. The peasants listen and take part. One, for instance, sings the words of Tancred, another those of Argante, while a third declaims the poetic links which connect their speeches. There are more resources than might be believed in a people capable of such intellectual pleasures; there is a glory more real than might be imagined in educating, as these poets did, not a small minority, but even shepherds and artisans; in preserving in their midst heroic traditions, the feeling for beauty which raises the imagination, and the admiration of good which kindles the heart.

It is thus that poetry returns to the people from whom it originated. These Italians can do without clothing and bread, but not without song. In the country round Siena there are poor creatures who will never learn to read, and yet they improvise verses and reveal beauties such as will never be achieved by the more cultured poets. There, as in some hamlets of Corsica and of Sicily, at every wedding, baptism, or funeral, an extemporiser sanctifies by his words the joy or sorrow of the family. Even in Rome the people of the suburbs preserve their traditions and their poetic pastimes. The people of Trastevere call themselves sons of the Trojans; they relate in the taverns the story of the beautiful Tarpeia who betrayed her country for bracelets, and who was buried beneath the shields. Open those little books displayed at the markets and fairs, which the villagers buy together with the silver jewellery that they take to their wives, and the red ribands with which they adorn the horns of their oxen, and you will not find there such prose arguments of the lost epics of antiquity as our stories of Robert the Devil and the four sons of Aymon. Neither are these simple romances like our

songs of St. Hubert or of Geneviève de Brabant. They are little epics, *chansons de geste*, as they were called in the Middle Ages, divided into octaves, and written in the epic metre of Tasso and Ariosto. They number from five hundred to two thousand lines, much too many to be remembered by all; they can only be learnt by people who make it their trade to recite rhapsodies, as they did in Greece in the times of Homer. They were only to be recited from beginning to end on leisure days and holidays; it is one of those serious recreations which please so greatly the people of the country round Rome, and which captivate their audience for hours at a time in the public squares. Numerous examples of such compositions have been preserved. Some form a complete cycle of sacred poetry beginning with the fall of the angels and the Creation, and introducing Joseph, Samson, Judith, the most touching mysteries of the New Testament, the legends of the saints, Nero and the martyrdom of the holy Apostles, Constantine, Attila, and St. Leo the Great. In them history is popularised to such an extent that St. John Chrysostom is represented as a converted brigand-chief.

Other poems form a romantic cycle beginning with Grecian fables, touching upon Roman antiquity, and ending with selected legends of mediæval times. In them occur the story of Orpheus, that of Pyramus and Thisbe, the combat between the Horatii and Curiatii, the life of Queen Olivia, Florinda and Chiara-Stella, the giant Morant, and the rout of Roncesvalles. The following is a brief summary of one of these little poems—the story of Pope Alexander III ("Istoria di papa Alessandro Terzo," Todi, 1812). Nowhere is more clearly illustrated the true spirit of this work of genius which borrows from traditions, transforms them, and produces from them epics. The poem has an historical basis, but the popular genius alters history to make it appear more pathetic and thrilling.

The poem begins with the invocation not to adhere to classical rules, but to the customs of a Christian people among whom prayer is believed to sanctify every action and to purify every pleasure. Moreover, no subject is more worthy of being handled with respect: it is concerned with celebrating, in the person of Alexander and Frederick Barbarossa, the struggle between the papacy and the empire,

The poet sides with the pope, but he refrains from vilifying the person of the emperor. He ennobles him rather by a bold fiction, which explains the error of the hero and grants him the excuse of fatalism. Barbarossa made a vow to deliver the tomb of Christ, but before leading Christian hosts into Palestine, a hostile country, he went there alone, disguised as a pilgrim, to thwart the vigilance of the sultan and gauge the strength of the infidel forces. A cardinal whom the author does not name, and whom he invents to make him the evil genius of the poem, warns the sultan by a letter sealed with the papal seal. Frederick is discovered and thrown into chains. But he ransoms himself at the price of his weight in gold, embarks, and returns to Italy, throwing the blame on the pope to whom he unjustly ascribes the ruin of his plans. At the approach of the imperial army, Alexander leaves Rome; all the gates are closed against the august fugitive. Reduced to concealing his dignity beneath the habit of a poor priest, staff in hand, he arrives in Venice. He enters by night, and rests on the steps of the Church of San Salvatore and waits for the morning. At the first streaks of dawn the keeper of the

church, on opening the door, finds the stranger and points out to him a monastery where a chaplain is needed. Alexander offers his services and is received with hospitality. He lives there in holy poverty, wearing a ragged cloak, forgotten by the world and content with his lot. The poet represents the retreat of Alexander as lasting fourteen years. At the end of this time, it happens that a stranger on his way to Venice kneels down in the church in which Alexander, unknown to all, is saying mass. He recognises the supposed chaplain and proclaims to the doge, Sebastian Ziani, and to the whole assembled council, what an illustrious guest is in their town. At this point the story assumes a very lofty and quite an epic strain. Then the doge orders a papal cloak to be made immediately. The nobles and clergy are assembled; the doge at their head embarks on a gondola, goes in state to the convent and orders the religious to march one by one before him. The monks, awed by such a visit, come down and pass before him tremblingly. Alexander brings up the rear, and then the doge, the lords, and the clergy fall on their knees before him, reclothe him in the papal robe, and ask his

blessing. He is led in procession to St. Mark's, then, mounting the marble staircase of the palace, he takes his place at the banquet, and ends the feast with a blessing to the people.

But Venice offers more than homage to the banished pope. She sends an ambassador to the emperor, who rejects every proposal. He demands that Alexander shall be delivered up to him with his feet and wrists bound, and orders his son Otto to carry the summons at the head of seventy-five galleys. The Venetians in response take up arms; they only number thirty-five ships, but these are manned by picked men, accustomed to the sea. If numbers are against them, they have right on their side.

The battle is terrible and the victory decisive. The doge returns to Venice, leading the young prince captive. The emperor yields at last. On the appointed day the pope has his throne placed in the square of St. Mark and in front of the basilica. At the same time the emperor appears, surrounded by his train; he kneels down, kisses the feet of the pontiff, and receives from him absolution for his sin. It is to this glorious struggle that the poet, in accordance with tradition, ascribes

the privileges of Venice and the betrothal of the doge with the Adriatic. Just when Sebastian Ziani is returning from the contest, bringing in his train the remnants of the imperial fleet, the pope goes before him to the Lido, and there, taking from his finger a beautiful ring, he says to the doge, "I wish to establish by decree that the Prince of Venice be called the Prince of the Sea, both he and his successors for all time." Then he puts the ring on the prince, who throws it into the water and the sea is wedded:

> "E poi l'annello al principe ebbe dato
> Che lo diè all 'acque; e'l mar fu sposato."

This conclusion is beautiful, and many other lines distinguished by their vigour and *naïveté* could be quoted. But what is especially remarkable is that the war between Alexander III and Frederick Barbarossa, and subsequently the quarrel between the Guelfs and Ghibellines, of the papacy and the empire, has left a remembrance so lasting, not among the scholars, but among the common people who are not always ungrateful. While lawyers and the majority of historians did not recognise these great popes as defenders of the liberties

of the Church and of Italy, while they were denounced as ambitious priests and enemies of the peace of kings, the people did not forget them. The republic of Siena took in her pay the painter Spinello Aretino, and commissioned him to execute on the walls of the Palazzo Publico the beautiful frescoes in which was depicted the whole story of Alexander III.

Venice has had the same subject represented in her great council hall, first by Giovanni Bellini, and afterwards by Tintoretto, when fire had destroyed the inimitable work of the old master. At the same time popular tradition was handed down by word of mouth and in the songs which celebrated his story until the time of that epic printed at Todi some years ago and still repeated in our day in the mountains of Umbria and of the Sabines.

It may be thought that too much stress has been laid on the last strains of popular poetry and also on its earliest lispings, but at the same time the crudeness of the primitive inscriptions and the monotony of the last-mentioned short epics have not been slurred over. Poetry is innate in the people just as bread is in the earth, it must be brought forth by skill and

labour. If poetry is not wrested from the sole control of the people, it becomes trivial; these anonymous songs, deficient in originality, which each has the right to mutilate and to adapt, are constantly being altered, losing in each century a few verses and a few episodes, until at last even beggars and nursemaids grow weary of repeating them. On the other hand, when a cultured mind has borrowed from their transient qualities, when a poet or a school of poets has made a selection and a sequence from them, then lasting works are produced. But, too often the impress of the scholarly borrower extinguishes the spontaneity of the primitive authors. The poetry of the early Franciscans was produced at that instructive and fascinating moment when art begins to seize popular inspiration, and though that inspiration is at times irregularly expressed its value is from the first fully realised.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

Page 3. *The Origin of the Catacombs.*—It is now agreed by authorities to be an erroneous idea that the catacombs originated from the need of the Christians to find concealment in times of persecution. Such persecutions doubtless led to the additional use of the catacombs as places of refuge for the hunted Christians, but the formation of the earliest catacombs as places of sepulture has been proved to date from apostolic times, which are anterior to the earliest outbreak of pagan persecution. In connection with this point an interesting summary of the history of catacomb construction is to be found in Rossi's *Roma Sotteranea,* which he introduces by the statement that the Roman Christians of the apostolic age began the construction of subterranean cemeteries when the work was comparatively new.

Page 5. *Symbolism in the Catacombs.*—Symbolism has been the characteristic of all ancient religious teaching, but it figures more largely in Christian than in pagan times, because the abstract truths of Christianity are such that in no other way could they be brought home to a primitive civilisation. The best examples of this early use of symbolism are to be found in the catacombs of Rome. There are some symbols which may be called natural: for instance, spring-time and morning are natural symbols of youth. But there are many more which are entirely conventional and cannot be understood without

a knowledge of their history. One of most frequent recurrence in the catacombs is the fish. It entered into the cycle of Christian thought and art in primitive times, partly because Christians owed their spiritual birth to the element of water, partly because Christ Himself was commonly spoken of under the mysterious name of the fish. Therefore the emblem of the fish was used in two senses; sometimes it represented our Lord, and sometimes a Christian soul. The origin of its former use is by no means clear, but it is believed that it suggested the famous acrostic quoted by Eusebius and St. Augustine from the so-called Sibylline verse, which by taking the initial letters of so many lines gives us the Greek words for "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour"; and then the initials of these several words taken together make up the word ΙΧΘΥΣ, or "fish."

Page 5. *The Good Shepherd.*—A figure of the Good Shepherd with, not a lamb, but a goat upon His shoulders, is to be found in the cemetery of Priscilla. TWINING, the author of *Symbols and Emblems*, gives an illustration of the Good Shepherd with the kid in the cemetery of SS. Marcellinus and Peter, and refers to Rossi's *Roma Sotteranea.*

"'He saves the sheep, the goats he doth not save.'
So rang Tertullian's sentence, on the side
Of that unpitying Phrygian sect which cried,
'Him can no fount of fresh forgiveness lave.'

'Who sins, once wash'd by the baptismal wave'—
So spake the fierce Tertullian. But she sigh'd,
The infant Church! of love she felt the tide
Stream on her from her Lord's yet recent grave.

And then she smiled; and in the Catacombs,
With eye suffused but heart inspired true,
On those walls subterranean, where she hid
Her head 'mid ignominy, death, and tombs,
She her Good Shepherd's hasty image drew—
And on his shoulders, not a lamb, a kid."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Some of the paintings in the catacombs represent the Good Shepherd bearing, not a sheep, but a goat. Some archæologists regard this symbol as a servile imitation of pagan art which depicted Apollo in the guise of a shepherd tending the flocks of Admetus and bearing a goat upon his shoulders. By referring to contemporary controversies a more strictly theological and truer interpretation can be brought to bear upon this symbol. When, in the second century, the sect of the Montanists refused the Church the right to remit sins committed after baptism, Catholics in their turn brought forward the example of the Good Shepherd bringing back the lost sheep. But Tertullian, who had just used his vehement speech in the service of heresy, reproached Catholics for profaning this parable, for painting it even on the drinking-cups used at their banquets. "Christ," said he, "saves only the sheep; he has no compassion for goats" (*De Pudicit*, cap. vii., x., xiii.) The Church answered this dispiriting doctrine by placing a goat upon the shoulders of the Shepherd of Eternity. In order that no one shall misunderstand him, St. Eucher in the fifth century declares that the sheep represent the righteous, and the goats the sinners (*Liber formularum spiritualis intelligentiæ*). OZANAM.

Page 6. These explanations are not at all arbitrary, they are borrowed from Christian antiquity. *Cf.* Clement

of Alexandria, *Pædagog III; Constitut. apost.*, v., cap. vii.; St. Augustine, *Epist.* 48; id., *De civ. Dei*, xviii. 23; Optatus Milevit, *Contra Parmen.*, iii. 2; St. Eucher, *Liber formularum spiritualis intelligentiæ.* OZANAM.

Page 9. *Prudentius Arelius Clemens* (348–400), the most remarkable of the earlier Christian poets of the West, was born in Spain and spent the greater part of his life in religious exercises and retirement from the world. He wrote numerous poems on religious themes, of which the following are the chief: *Psychomachia,* the work which had the greatest influence of all his writings and depicts the struggle of Christendom with paganism; *Peristephanon liber,* fourteen hymns in honour of saints who had received the crown of martyrdom; *Apotheosis,* on the divinity of Christ. He followed the model of Horace, and has been hyperbolically called "the Christian Virgil and Horace."

Page 17. These two lines sum up the story of St. Mark, the disciple of St. Peter, who was charged at first by the head of the Apostles to evangelise the north of Italy; later he became Bishop of Alexandria, where was his tomb and whence the Venetians removed his relics in order to give them a glorious resting-place on the shores of the lakes. OZANAM.

Page 22. *King Codrus,* the last king of Athens, acting on the word of the oracle, that the enemy would be victorious if the life of the Attic king was spared, resolved to sacrifice himself for his country and allowed himself to be slain.

Page 23. *Saint Januarius,* martyr, Bishop of Beneventum, is believed to have suffered martyrdom in the

persecution of Diocletian, *c.* 305. His body was brought to Naples, where his holy blood is kept to this day in a glass phial, which, on being set near his head, becomes liquid.

Page 23. *Antenor.*—One of the wisest of the elders of Troy. On the capture of Troy, Antenor was spared by the Greeks and journeyed to the Adriatic, where he founded "Patavium"—Padua. According to Tacitus and Strabo, the Paduans celebrated every thirty years the "ludi" commemorating the founding of their city by Antenor in an ancient theatre, the ruins of which have been recently found.

Page 24. *The Lombard League,* a confederation which included nearly all the cities of Lombardy, was formed in 1167 to check the power of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. It secured liberties by the Peace of Constance in 1184, and was renewed against Frederick II in 1226.

Page 25. Cf. *Recherches sur les Sources poétiques de la Divine Comédie:* l'introduction à *Dante et la philosophie Catholique au treizième siècle.* OZANAM.

Page 26. *Convito,* Treatise I, chap. X.

Page 27. *Giovanni del Virgilio,* described by Boccaccio as "a most renowned and great poet, and one who had enjoyed Dante's very special friendship," was born in Bologna, where later he became Professor in the Studium. He earned his cognomen of Del Virgilio by the success of his expositions or imitations of the great master; he gained great fame as a teacher and as a reverent disciple of the great Paduan school of Latin poetry of which Mussato was the chief ornament. He was on terms of

great intimacy with Dante, to whom he ventured to address letters in which he condemned Dante's use of the vernacular.

For translation of correspondence between Dante and Virgilio, see *Dante and Giovanni Virgilio*, by P. H. Wicksteed and E. J. Gardner.

Page 27. *Carmen*, i. p. 146.

Page 27. *Ganymede.*—Hom. *Il.*, xx. 232; *Aen.*, v. 253.

Page 28. Villani says that Dante's exile from Florence was "for the reason that when Lord Charles of Valois, of the house of France, came to Florence in 1301 and drove out the White party, as is mentioned above under the date, the said Dante was one of the chief governors of our city, and belonged to that party, Guelf though he was, and therefore, *for no other fault*, he was driven forth and banished with the said party from Florence." It is generally considered that Dante's real offence was his opposition to the policy of Pope Boniface. In the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (i. 6) he declares that he is suffering unjustly because of his love for Florence.

Page 28. *Michelino, Domenico di, c.* 1450, a pupil of Fra Angelico, who was ordered by the state to paint his wonderful picture in honour of Dante in 1465. His works, with this exception, are hardly identified.

Page 29. *Chansons de Geste.*—Early French narrative poetry having for its subject some event which is, or is supposed to be, historical and French, and being always written in stanzaic form. Their date of production extends roughly from the eleventh to the fourteenth century. Two classes of persons shared in their production—the *trouvère* who composed them, and the *jongleur* who carried

them about in manuscript or in his memory from castle to castle and whose duty it was to sing them to the accompaniment of the harp.

Page 29. *Roland,* the hero of the national epic of France, was the nephew of Charlemagne and the greatest of his paladins. On Charlemagne's return from Spain, Roland, commanding the rear-guard of his forces, fell into an ambuscade in the defile of Roncesvalles and perished with the flower of French chivalry. His fabulous sword Durindana remained unbroken after he had struck it ten times on a rock, and legend tells us that he finally threw it into a poisoned stream.

Page 29. *Oliver,* brother-in-arms to Roland, on one occasion was defending a castle that Roland was besieging. After the siege had continued for a long time, it was determined to decide the conflict by single combat between two knights chosen on either side by lots. Thus unwittingly Roland and Oliver contended till an angel with uplifted hand bade them cease their strife. Raising their helmets they each recognised his unknown enemy and they were speedily reconciled. As a result of the equality of the combat there arose a proverb—"A Roland for an Oliver."

Page 29. *Beuves d'Antone.*—An Anglo-Norman metrical romance dating from the thirteenth century, and a subject treated by many European poets in the Middle Ages. The tale was interpolated in the *Reali di Francia,* the Italian version of Carolingian legend.

Page 32. *Tarpeia,* daughter of the governor of the Roman citadel on the Capitoline hill, was tempted by the gold on the Sabine bracelets and collars to open a gate of

the fortress to the Sabines. As they entered they threw their shields upon her, and thus crushed her to death. The Tarpeian rock, a part of the Capitoline, was named after her.

Page 33. *St. John Chrysostom,* "The Golden-Mouthed," 347–407, was the most prominent doctor of the Greek Church and the greatest preacher ever heard in a Christian pulpit. He was born in an age of religious struggle, and until his health broke down devoted himself to an ascetic and religious life, spending some years as a hermit in caves near Antioch. His first step to fame was the production of his great commentary, an inexhaustible treasury of dogmatic, moral, and historical knowledge. As a result he was nominated to the See of Constantinople, where he won for himself the hostility of the upper classes by his denunciation of their luxury and corruption. A synod was called, a long list of absurd accusations was levelled against him, and he was deposed and exiled. While in exile, the cathedral and other buildings in Constantinople were burned, and his friends with whom he continued to communicate were accused of incendiarism and prosecuted. He was subjected to further torture by his conquerors, and to these tortures he at length succumbed.

Page 39. *Spinello Aretino, c.* 1330, one of the most notable of the Giottesques. His skill may be judged from numerous pictures at San Miniato, outside Florence, the Campo Santo of Pisa, and the Palazzo Publico of Siena. His figures are remarkable for energy and character though often defective in proportions, and these characteristics are well illustrated in the frescoes at Siena treating of the Venetian campaign against Frederick Barbarossa under the leadership of Pope Alexander III.

CHAPTER II

SAINT FRANCIS

ITALIAN poetry, like all other poetry, springs from two sources, the sensual and the religious, which sometimes mingle their streams, even though it has always been possible to follow the two distinct currents from the earliest times to our own.

We find the earliest Italian poems at the end of the twelfth century growing up amidst the fascinations of that land of warmth and sunshine, Sicily—among a people of mixed Grecian and Arabian descent, clever and unrestrained in their pleasures as in their passions.

This new art flourished at the court of Frederick II, that powerful and evil prince whose genius and impiety amazed the whole of Europe and alarmed the Church for fifty years, who was both business-like and voluptuous, and who divided his leisure hours between a seraglio of fair captives and an

academy of Mahometan scholars, troubadours, and jongleurs. He himself had not disdained to write in the melodious tongue of his subjects. His chancellor, Pietro della Vigne, his sons, Enzo and Manfred, imitated him, and soon, from Palermo to Messina, could be heard nothing but the strains of a poetry destined to have a dangerous influence, in which the chivalry of the Provençals mingled with the ardent passions of the East. From this source originated the all too fruitful vein which flows in the reprehensible stories of Boccaccio and in the comedies and pastoral dramas of the old Italian theatre. Hence arose that madly voluptuous literature which ultimately weakened character as well as mind, and which accustomed the youth of Italy to spend their lives at the feet of women and to become oblivious of their country and of liberty.

But, happily for Italy, we also find Christian poetry flowing freely, from the *Divine Comedy* to *Jerusalem Delivered*, and the hymns of Manzoni. We are not, however, sufficiently acquainted with the great heights from which this wide stream has descended. Certainly we know the names of a small number

of Tuscans whom Dante honours with his praise, whom he acknowledges as his predecessors and his masters.

But neither the science of Brunetto Latini and Guido Cavalcanti, nor the platonic sentiment of Guido Guinicelli, nor the piety of Guittone d'Arezzo, suffices to explain the wealth of that Christian ardour which bursts forth from the fifteen thousand lines of the "Inferno," "Purgatorio," and "Paradiso." We must climb higher and seek on another Italian height a strain of poetry similar to that of Sicily, another circle of inspired men under the leadership of a powerful master, and, lastly, that accumulation of great causes without which there are no great effects.

When leaving Rome on a journey towards the north, after traversing the wonderful expanse of the Roman Campagna, and crossing the Tiber a little above Civita Castellana, a mountainous tract winds slowly upwards from the banks of the Tiber to the crest of the Apennines. That remote country, picturesque and health-giving, is called Umbria. It has the wild beauty of the Alps, the same frowning summits, forests, and ravines down which dash resounding

cascades, but its climate is not marred by perpetual snows, and it possesses all the richness of a tropical vegetation in which oak and fir grow side by side with the olive and the vine. Nature appears there both gentle and dignified. She inspires reverence without fear, and if the might of the Creator is apparent in all things, His bounty is also everywhere evident. The hand of man has not spoilt these pictures. Some old towns, such as Narni, Terni, Amelia, Spoleto, are perched on rocks or nestle in the valleys, still furnished with battlements, full of classical and religious memories, proudly claiming to be the home of some saint whose relics they preserve, and of some great Christian artist whose works they cherish. There are indeed few summits, however rugged and bare, without a hermitage or a shrine visited by pilgrims. In the heart of the country stretches a valley larger than the others, its horizon is more extensive, the surrounding mountains make grander curves, abundant streams cut their paths through the richly cultivated land. The two entrances to this earthly paradise are protected by two towns, Perugia on the north, and Foligno

on the south. On the west is the little city of Bevagna, where Propertius the fastidious and voluptuous poet was born. To the east, and on a height which overlooks the whole district, towers Assisi, where was to be born the singer of a nobler love.

A country must not only be beautiful and fertile, it must also be rich in historical associations to produce great men. This preparation was not wanting in Italy at the very end of the twelfth century.

The second conflict between the papacy and the empire had just ended gloriously, under the leadership of Alexander III. It had resulted in liberty, power, and glory, all that most nearly concerns the people, that inspires them, and gives them the right and the desire to immortalise themselves in its monuments. All the arts awoke. The religious and political ideals which had led the Italians to the fields of battle for a hundred years were to be pursued by word as they had been pursued by arms. If they were to move the heart of the people it was necessary for them to be expressed, not in the idioms of scholars, but in homely language, and after having formed a nation to found a literature.

An example was ready to hand. The poetry of France had already crossed the Alps, her songs were sung in the castle halls and in the public squares. If these models were not entirely without blemish, if the fabliaux of the trouvères and the irreverent sirventes of many of the troubadours were addressed to the dissolute, there were also pious lays like those of Rambaud of Vaqueiras, heroic legends such as the battles of Charlemagne and the death of Roland, quite capable of kindling the imaginations of Christians. Undoubtedly political activity and literary intercourse were more rife in the Lombard towns, which had borne the chief brunt of the war and had gathered the first fruits of peace.

Nevertheless the cities of Umbria had not been the last to rally under the banner of papacy and liberty. They hastened to confirm their victory by showing their sovereignty, by fortifying themselves and by raising troops. Assisi had her nobles, her soldiers whom she sent to make war on Perugia. She had also merchants who carried their trade beyond the Alps, and who brought back great profits and some useful information. In this way a cloth-seller called Pietro Bernardone, having visited

France in 1182, and finding on his return that his wife had presented him with a son, named him Francis in memory of the beautiful country where he had just made large profits. The humble merchant little thought that this name of his own invention would be invoked by the Church and borne by kings.

The young Francis, entrusted at an early age to the priests of the Church of St. Giorgio, had received from them the elements of the humane sciences. He is too often represented, as he depicted himself, as a man without culture and without knowledge. He retained from his short studies enough Latin to understand readily the holy books, and a genuine respect for letters. This was not one of the joys which he abandoned after his conversion. He cherished it to such a degree that if he found on the road a scrap of writing, he picked it up carefully for fear of trampling on the name of the Saviour, or on some passage which treated of divine matters. And, when one of his followers asked him why he picked up pagan writings with equal care, he replied, "My son, it is because I find in them letters which compose the glorious name of God." And he completed his thought

by adding: "Whatever merit there is in these writings belongs neither to paganism nor to humanity but to God alone, Who is the author of all good." And, indeed, what are all the sacred and profane literatures but the characters with which God imprints His name on the human mind, as He imprints it on the heavens with the stars?

However, the literary education of St. Francis was accomplished less by classical studies, to which he devoted little time, than by the French language, which was already esteemed in Italy as the most melodious of all, and as the preserver of the traditions of chivalry which softened the uncouthness of the Middle Ages. He had a secret attraction for that country of France to which he owed his name; he loved her language; though he expressed himself in it haltingly, he spoke it with his Brothers. He made the neighbouring woods resound with French canticles. He was to be seen, in the early days of his penitence, begging in French on the steps of St. Peter's at Rome, or while he was hard at work rebuilding the Church of San Damieno, addressing the inhabitants and passers-by in French, invoking them to raise up the house

of God. If he borrowed the French idiom, if he gained inspiration from French poetry, he found in it sentiments of courtesy and generosity which took root in his heart and were revealed in his actions. He was the life of the joyous bands which were formed there under the name of "corti," in the town of Assisi as throughout Italy, and which popularised the frivolity, the romantic customs, the sensuous pleasures of the Provençals. Often his companions, captivated by his good looks and chivalrous manners, chose him for their leader and, as they expressed it, for the lord of their banquets. When they saw him pass by in rich apparel, with staff of office in his hand, surrounded by his friends, who roamed the streets each evening with torches and singing songs, the crowd would admire him and proclaim him as "the flower of the nobility."

He himself took literally the noisy flatteries murmured on his path. This merchant's son who impoverished his father by his bounty did not give up hope of becoming a great prince, and books of chivalry told him of no adventures he had not dreamed of.

At first he conceived the idea of conquering his principality with lance in hand, of attach-

ing himself to the suite of Gauthier de Brienne, who was about to reclaim from Frederick II the beautiful kingdom of Sicily.

Then it was that he had a mysterious vision. He saw himself in the middle of a superb palace, filled with arms and rich accoutrements; glistening shields were hanging on the walls, and when he asked who was the owner of this castle and armour, he was told that all would belong to him and his knights. We need not suppose that later the servant of God forgot this dream, or that he did not see anything more in it than a delusion of an evil mind; he recognised in it a warning from heaven, he thought to interpret it by instituting that religious life of the Brothers-minor, which was in his eyes like a knight-errantry, established, as the other had been, to redress wrongs and to defend the weak.

This comparison pleased him, and when he wished to praise those of his followers whom he favoured on account of their zeal and sanctity, he said, "These are my paladins of the Round Table." Like a true knight, he had to respond to the call of the Crusades. In 1220 he crossed over the sea and joined the army of the Christians at Damietta. Bolder

than all those knights encased in armour, he forced his way right up to the Sultan of Egypt, preached the faith publicly, and challenged the priests of Mahomet in the ordeal by fire. At last he departed, having won the respect of the infidels, and left in the holy places a colony of his followers, who established themselves there under the name of Fathers of the Holy Land, and who are there still as guardians of the Holy Sepulchre and of the sword of Godfrey. After that, it is not surprising that the biographies of St. Francis ascribe to him all the merits of military glory, and that St. Bonaventura when he had nearly finished the account of the life and combats of his master cried:

"And now, valorous soldier of Christ, bear the arms of that unconquerable chief who will put your enemies to flight. Hoist the banner of the King Most High, at sight of it the courage of all the fighters in the heavenly host will be revived. That prophetic vision is now accomplished, according to which, O Captain of Christ's soldiers, you were destined to don the heavenly armour."

But, as all true knights were devoted to the service of some lady, Francis had to choose his. Indeed, a few days before his

conversion, his friends finding him wrapt in thought asked him if he were thinking of taking a wife, and he replied: "It is true, I am contemplating taking the noblest, richest, and most beautiful lady that ever lived." This was the description he gave of his ideal of all perfection, the type of all moral beauty, namely Poverty. He loved to personify this virtue according to the symbolic genius of his time; he imagined her as a heavenly damsel whom he called in turn the lady of his thoughts, his betrothed, his spouse. He bestowed on her all the power which the troubadours attributed to the noble ladies celebrated in their poems—the power of wresting from the souls captivated by her all worldly thoughts and inclinations, of elevating such souls to the society of the angels. But while with the troubadours these platonic loves were merely witticisms, the invisible beauty which had ravished St. Francis wrung from him the most impassioned cries. Open any of the mediæval poets and you will find no song more bold, no words more impassioned, than this prayer of the penitent of Assisi:

"O my most sweet Lord Jesus Christ, have pity on me and on my Lady Poverty, for I burn with love

of her, and without her I cannot rest. O my Lord, Who didst cause me to be enamoured of her, Thou knowest that she is sitting in sadness, rejected by all; 'the mistress of nations is become as a widow,' vile and contemptible; the queen of all virtues, seated on a dunghill, complains that all her friends have despised her, and are become her enemies;—they have proved themselves deceivers, and not spouses. Behold, O Lord Jesus! how truly Poverty is the queen of all the virtues; for, leaving the abode of Angels, Thou didst come down to earth that Thou mightest espouse her to Thyself with constant love, and produce from her, in her, and by her, the children of all perfection. . . . At Thy birth she received Thee in a manger and a stable; and during Thy life she so stripped Thee of all things that she would not even allow Thee a stone whereon to rest Thy head. As a most faithful consort she accompanied Thee when Thou didst go forth to fight for our Redemption; and in the conflict of Thy Passion she alone stood by as Thy armour-bearer; when Thy disciples fled, and denied Thy Name, she did not leave Thee, but, with the whole band of her princes, she fearlessly adhered to Thee. On account of the height of Thy Cross, even Thy Mother (who devotedly loved Thee, and shared so deeply in the bitterness of Thy Passion) could not reach Thee; but Thy Lady Poverty, with companion Want, embraced Thee more closely than ever, and was more firmly united to Thee in Thy sufferings. Therefore she would not allow Thy Cross to be smoothed or in any way polished; the very nails were

(as it is believed) too few in number, not sharpened nor ground; but she provided only three—blunt, thick, and rough—in order to increase Thy torments. And when Thou wast consumed with thirst, she, Thy faithful spouse, was there, and did not allow Thee to have even a drop of water; but by means of the impious executioners she prepared for Thee a draught so bitter that Thou couldst only taste, not drink it. In the strong embrace of this Thy spouse, Thou didst breathe forth Thy Soul. Nor did she forsake Thee at Thy burial, but she took care that Thou shouldst have neither sepulchre, nor ointments, nor winding-clothes, except what were lent Thee by others.

"This Thy holy spouse was not absent from Thy Resurrection, for rising gloriously in her embrace Thou didst leave in the Sepulchre all these borrowed things. Thou didst bear her with Thee to heaven, leaving all that is in the world. And now Thou hast given to thy Lady Poverty the seal of Thy kingdom, that she may sign the elect who walk in the way of perfection. Oh! who would not love the Lady Poverty above all! I beseech thee to grant me this privilege; I beg to be enriched with this much-desired treasure. O most poor Jesus, I ask this favour for myself and my children for ever, that for love of Thee they may never possess anything of their own, that they may use the goods of others sparingly, and that they may suffer Poverty as long as they live in this miserable world. Amen."

If it was blessed to wear the colours of a

noble lady and glorious to die for her, it was equally honourable to be able to chant her praises. A truly chivalrous young knight must strive to compose verses and to recite them to the accompaniment of the lute or rota. Francis was not unacquainted with this gentle pastime. He loved music, and his biographers praise the beauty of his sweet and powerful, clear and flexible voice. In his youth he had made the streets of Assisi resound with his gay refrains. After his conversion he repeated hymns to the echoes of the desert. One evening when he was moved to tears by the song of a nightingale, he felt inspired to reply to her, and far into the night he chanted the praises of God alternately with her. The legend adds that Francis found that he was exhausted first, and praised the bird who had conquered him. Never in his fullest confession of what he called the wanderings of his early life, in his bitterest contempt for worldly pleasures, did he think of condemning this art of melody which he ranked among the joys of heaven. It is related that towards the end of his career, and at a time when he was already bowing beneath fatigues and austerities, this man, detached

from all worldly consolations, wished to hear a little music, in order, said he, to rekindle the joy of his soul. And as the rule did not allow the holy man to indulge in this pastime in an ordinary way, sooner than that he should be deprived of it the angels resolved to gratify his wish. On the following night, as he lay awake and meditated, he suddenly heard the sound of a lute of sweetest tone and dulcet melody. No one was visible; but in the nuances of sound which swelled and died away in the distance, the step of a musician pacing up and down beneath the window could almost be distinguished. The saint, transported by love for God, was so obsessed by the sweetness of these harmonies, that he thought for a moment he had passed to a better life.

The son of the merchant of Assisi had received all the culture which produced the poets of his times; for the poets of this stormy period did not expand in the atmosphere of the schools. The muse descended upon them in the stress of a life of warfare, of tournaments and battles. Often indeed, as in the case of Wolfram von Eschenbach, these eloquent men could not read. They

were inspired by the legends which they recited, the songs which they had heard, but above all by the secret promptings of the love which they confessed for their only master. This distinctive mark was not lacking in the poetical vocation of St. Francis. But he had yet to realise that there was within him something more than the ardour of an imagination kindled by memories and lectures; he had yet to learn what love possessed his heart.

Francis had scarcely reached his twenty-fourth year, and was devoted to pleasure with all the enthusiasm of his years and temperament, when he suddenly succumbed to a long illness. One day during his convalescence he went out leaning on a stick, and began to gaze from the terraces of Assisi upon the smiling country which they command; but the beauty of the fields, the peacefulness of the country-side, and all that pleases the eye had no longer any hold over his heart. He was amazed at this great change, and from that day he began to despise himself and to disdain all that he had admired in intercourse with men. He experienced that indescribable ennui which precedes the outburst of great passions. In vain did the

young man try to escape from them by taking refuge in the noisy society of his friends, in his warlike and adventurous plans. Nightly dreams lured him to another kind of life which he did not understand, and irresistible instinct impelled him to solitude. Often he would take the road to a neighbouring cave, and leaving his companions at the entrance he would penetrate into it alone, under the pretext of hunting for treasure. There he would pass long hours in an agony of mind which he could not describe, troubled by tumultuous thoughts, fears, and remorse. His heart knew that he would not find rest until he had accomplished something unknown to him, but more than human. Then he would pray God to show him the way, and he would come forth after this prayer so overwhelmed by fatigue that his companions on seeing him would hardly know him. One day, however, when he was continuing thus in prayer, he believed he saw before him Christ on the Cross of Calvary; and at this vision, his biographer relates, his soul seemed to melt within him, and the Passion of Christ was so deeply engraved upon his innermost being that he could not allow his thoughts to linger

on it lest he should be quite overwhelmed with grief. He was to be seen wandering in the country, giving free vent to his tears and sobs, and when he was asked if he was suffering from some misfortune, "Ah!" cried he, "I weep for the Passion of Jesus Christ my Master, for whom I ought not to be ashamed of weeping throughout the whole world."

That was the love which filled the life of St. Francis, the spark for which his genius waited. Many will doubt perhaps whether a love which inspires solitaries and fills convents can also produce poets. It is true that pagan antiquity knew nothing of such. Antiquity could know God, but not love Him. But from earliest Christian times this love has always ruled the world. It is this same love which conquered paganism in the amphitheatres and at the stake; which civilised the budding nations, which led them to the Crusades, and made of them heroes greater than those of the epics. It is the torch of the schools where letters revived during the barbarous ages; and who can doubt of its power over the human mind since it inspired all eloquent men from the time of St. Paul and St. Augustine to Bossuet; since it inspired

the Psalms of David and the hymns of the Church, the most sublime chants which have comforted the weary of the earth?

When the penitent of Assisi learnt to love God in the contemplation of the Cross, he also began to love humanity—humanity crucified, destitute and suffering; and it was this love which drew him towards the lepers, the wretched, and the outcast. From that time he had no peace until the day when, in presence of his bishop, he publicly stripped off his fine clothes to take a beggar's cloak. Those who first saw him pass by half-naked, bare-footed, in the squares of that town whose ornament and pride he had been, counted him a madman, and threw mud and stones at him. And yet, in becoming poor, in founding a new order of poor men like himself, he honoured Poverty, which is the most despised and the most universal of human conditions. He showed that in such a state may be found peace, dignity, and happiness. By so doing he pacified the resentful feelings of the indigent classes, reconciled them to the rich whom they learnt to envy no more. He made a truce in that ancient war between those who have and those who have not, and

strengthened the bonds already loosened of Christian society. By so doing, this mad man proved that he possessed the greatest possible tact, and that he had had reason to foresee that he would become a great prince; for whereas Plato never found fifty families to realise his ideal republic, the servant of God at the end of eleven years numbered a following of five thousand men, busied like himself in a life of heroism and strife. But this life, hard beyond conception, was also the freest, and, in consequence, the most poetic. Indeed, one thing alone confines human liberty, viz. fear, and all fear becoming ultimately the fear of suffering could have no weight with one who regarded suffering as a joy and glory. Freed from all servitude, from all trivial occupation, Francis lived in the contemplation of eternity, in a devotion which exalts all the faculties, and in intimate relationship with the whole Creation which offers the most poignant charms to the simple and the humble. He wandered about, he begged, he ate the bread of others, as did Homer, Dante, Tasso and Camoens, and all those poor geniuses to whom God has given neither shelter nor rest in this world, and whom He wished to keep in His

service as wanderers and travellers, to visit people, refresh them, and often to teach them.

Another point of resemblance and of relationship between St. Francis and these great minds was his passion for Nature. The love of Nature is the common bond of all poetry. There is no troubadour who does not celebrate to the best of his ability the joyous month of May, the return of the flowers, the sweet choruses of the birds, and the murmur of woodland streams. But when the same pictures recur in the same order and are expressed in the same language, it is often apparent that the aim of the poet is less to express a feeling than to satisfy a literary convention. The true love of Nature is not so easy to acquire or so common as one thinks, for it involves getting outside oneself and looking upon the external world with disinterest and respect, seeking in it not pleasures but lessons. Also Christianity, so often accused of trampling Nature under foot, has alone taught man to respect her, to love her truly, by making apparent the divine plan which upholds her, illumines and sanctifies her. It was with such clear vision that Francis contemplated creation; he searched in every

corner of it to discover traces of his God; he recognised Him Who is superbly beautiful in beautiful creatures; he did not despise the smallest and most insignificant, and, calling to mind their common origin, he named them his brothers and sisters. At peace with all things, and restored in some measure to the state of primitive innocence, his heart overflowed with love, not only for mankind, but for all the animals which browse, fly, or creep. He loved the rocks and forests, harvests and vines, the beauty of the fields, the freshness of the fountains, the verdure of the gardens, the earth, fire, air, and winds, and he exhorted them to remain pure, to honour God and to serve Him. Where other eyes would perceive only transitory beauties, he recognised, as if by second sight, the lasting bonds which link the physical with the moral order, the mysteries of Nature with those of faith. For this reason he never failed to admire the glory of the flowers, or to breathe their scents, for he thought of the Mystic Flower which sprang from the root of Jesse; and when he found many of them together, he preached to them as if they had been endowed with reason. He sometimes spent his time praising the industry

of the bees; and he who lacked all things would give them in winter honey and wine so that they should not perish from cold. He suggested as a model for his followers the diligence of the lark, the innocence of the turtle-dove. But nothing equalled his tender love for lambs, who recalled to him the humility and meekness of the Saviour. A legend runs that when travelling with a Brother in the marches of Ancona, he met a man carrying on his shoulder two little lambs hanging by a cord. And when the blessed Francis heard their bleating he was touched to the heart, and, approaching, he said to the man: "Why do you torment my brothers the lambs by carrying them thus bound and hanging?" The man replied that being in need of money he was carrying them to the neighbouring market to sell them to the butchers, who would kill them. "God forbid!" cried the saint; "take instead the cloak I am wearing and make me a present of these lambs." The other, asking nothing better, gave them, and took in exchange the cloak which was of far greater value, and which a faithful Christian had lent to the saint that same morning on account of the cold. Then Francis held the

lambs in his arms, not knowing what to do with them, and, after having consulted with his companion, he restored them to their original owner on one condition—that he should never sell them or do them any harm, but keep them, feed them, and take great care of them. This is a touching story, and one does not know whether to admire more the tender care of the saint for the little lambs or his simple trust in their master.

If Francis, through his innocence and simplicity, had returned to the state of Adam, our first father, who saw in all creatures the divine image and loved them with a brother's love, the creatures in their turn yielded to him the same obedience as to the first man, and restored that relationship which had been destroyed by sin. It is a characteristic which can be observed in many saints, that those regenerate souls regain the original sway of man over nature. The Fathers of the Thebaid were ministered to by the ravens and lions, St. Gall controlled the bears of the Alps. When St. Columba was crossing the forest of Luxeuil, the birds whom he called came to play with him, and the squirrels climbed down the trees on to his hand. The life of

St. Francis is full of similar incidents confirmed by eye-witnesses, which must be accepted, whether we explain them by that power of love which sooner or later commands and obtains love, or whether it be that in the presence of the servants of God the animals no longer feel the instinctive dread with which our depravity and lack of sympathy inspires them. When the penitent of Assisi, isolated from young and old, left his cell and appeared in the plains of Umbria, it was as if the animals saw only the divine impress on that emaciated face, where there was scarcely a trace of the earthly nature, and they surrounded the saint in reverence and obedience. The hares and pheasants sheltered in the folds of his habit. If he passed near a fold, and, according to his wont, greeted the sheep, calling them sisters, we are told that they would raise their heads and run after him, leaving the shepherds astounded. He himself, having withdrawn for so long from human joys, took a tender pleasure in the eager welcome which the beasts of the field gave to him. One day when he had climbed Mount Alvernia in order to pray there, a great number of birds surrounded him with

joyful cries, and beat their wings as if rejoicing in his approach. Then the saint said to his companion, "I see it is the divine will that we should stay here awhile, since our brothers the little birds seem so comforted by our presence." Very numerous are the artless stories of his contemporaries, but one especially reveals very clearly that poetical faculty which St. Francis had of inspiring and transforming all things and showing them in their true light. It happened that when he was going about the country preaching, on one occasion he was crossing the valley of Spoleto, not far from Bevagna, and chanced to pass by a place where there was a great multitude of birds, principally sparrows, crows, and doves. The blessed servant of God saw them, and by reason of the love he bore even for dumb creatures, he ran to the spot, leaving his companions for a while on the road. As he came nearer he saw that the birds were waiting for him, and he greeted them according to his custom. But, marvelling that they did not take to flight at sight of him, he was filled with joy, and humbly prayed them to listen to the word of God. And he said to them: "My brothers the little birds, you ought

especially to praise your Creator, and love Him always, for He has given you feathers to cover you, wings with which to fly, and all that is necessary for you. He has exalted you among the works of His hands, and has chosen for you a dwelling in the pure kingdom of the air. You have no need for either sowing or reaping or any care or forethought, for He nourishes you and tends you." At these words, as he himself recorded, and as his companions testified, the birds, holding up their heads according to their custom, began to flap their wings. But he, passing through their midst, walked up and down, touching them with the edge of his garment as he passed. Finally he blessed them, and making over them the sign of the Cross, he allowed them to fly away, after which the blessed Father went away with his disciples, full of joy. But as he was perfectly simple, by reason not of nature but of grace, he began to accuse himself of negligence for not having preached to the birds until that day, since they listened to the word of God with so much reverence.

This friendship of St. Francis for the lambs and doves must not be regarded as

trivial, it was inspired by the same passion which made him feel for the poor, feeble, and weak. Moreover, this excess of love had its use, in a country where they could not love enough, in that Italy of the Middle Ages which sinned and ruined itself by excess, by the obstinacy of its hatreds, by universal strife. Nothing could have been a finer example than this horror of destruction, carried to the length of putting the worms out of harm's way, saving the sheep from butchery in an age which endured the cruelties of Frederick II and his lieutenant, Eccelino the Cruel, which was to witness the torture of Ugolino and the Sicilian Vespers. This man, so simple that he loved to preach to flowers and birds, preached the Gospel alike in Guelf and Ghibelline towns. He assembled the citizens in the public squares of Padua, Brescia, Cremona, and Bologna, and began his discourse by exhorting them to peace. Then he entreated them to put an end to all enmity and to establish the bonds of friendship. And, according to the testimony of contemporary chronicles, many of those who had held peace in abomination now united in their loathing

of bloodshed. Thus it is that Francis of Assisi is the Orpheus of the Middle Ages, quelling the ferocity of beasts and the cruelty of men, and it is not surprising that his voice should have moved the wolves of the Apennines seeing that it appeased the deadly Italian vendetta.

A heart so filled with passion could not disburden itself by preaching alone. Preaching is limited to prose, and prose, however eloquent, is after all only the language of reason. When reason has expressed precisely and clearly the truth which she has conceived, she is content, but love is not so easily satisfied; she must reproduce the beauties by which she is touched in language which thrills and delights. Love is restless; nothing satisfies her, but on the other hand nothing daunts her. She amplifies speech, she gives it poetic flight, she adorns it with rhythm and melody as with two wings. Saint Francis saw that the Church honoured poetry by giving her the first place in her worship, and admitting her to the very choir of her basilicas and even to the foot of the altar, while eloquence must remain in the pulpit, nearer the door and the crowd. He himself had proved the powerless-

ness of ordinary speech to express all which stirred his soul. When the name of the Saviour Christ came to his lips he could not proceed, his voice would alter, according to the apt description of St. Bonaventura, as if he had heard a melody within him whose notes he wished to recall. But this melody by which he was haunted ended by bursting forth into a new song, and this is what the historians record:

"In the eighteenth year of his penitence, the servant of God, after a forty nights' vigil, had an ecstasy, after which he ordered Brother Leo to take a pen and write. Then he intoned the Canticle of the Sun and, after he had improvised it, he charged Brother Pacifico, who had been a poet in his worldly life, to fit the words to a more regular rhythm, and he ordered the brothers to learn them by heart; so that they might recite them every day. The words of the Canticle are these:

ST. FRANCIS' 'LAUDES CREATURARUM'

"Here beginneth the praise of created things which the blessed Francis made to the praise and glory of God when he lay sick at St. Damian's.

"O highest, almighty, excellent Lord,
Thine be the praise, the glory, the honour, and all benediction.

To Thee, O Highest, alone they belong,
And to name Thee no man is worthy.

Be Thou blessed, O Lord, with all things created,
Especially my Lord and Brother the Sun,
For by his dawning thou lightenest our darkness;
Beautiful is he and radiant with mighty splendour:
Of Thee, O Most High, he beareth the token.

Praised be Thou, O Lord, for Sister Moon and the Stars,
For that Thou madest them clear, precious, and lovely.
Praised be Thou, O Lord, for our Brother the Wind,
For air and cloud and sunshine and every weather
Whereby Thou givest thy creatures their sustenance.

Praised be Thou, O Lord, for Sister Water,
Our helpmate, lowly and precious and pure.

Praised be Thou, O Lord, for our Brother the Fire,
Whereby Thou sheddest Thy light on darkness,
For he is comely and pleasant and mighty and strong.

Praised be Thou, O Lord, for our Sister the Earth,
That as a Mother sustaineth and feedeth us,
And after its kind bringeth forth fruit
And grass and many-coloured flowers."

A few days afterwards a great dispute arose between the bishop of Assisi and the magistrates of the city. The bishop ful-

minated the interdict, the magistrates placed the prelate beyond the pale of the law, and forbade all intercourse with him and his followers. The saint, distressed by such strife, lamented that there was no one who would intervene to establish peace. He then added to his canticle the following verse:

"Praised be Thou, O Lord, for them that for Thy love forgive,
And undergo tribulation and weakness,
Blessed are they that shall in peace sustain,
For by Thee, O Most High, they shall be crowned."

Then he ordered his followers to go boldly to seek the principal men of the town and to beg them to make their way to the bishop, and on arriving there to sing in chorus the new verse. The disciples obeyed and, at the chanting of his words, to which God seemed to lend a secret virtue, the adversaries embraced each other in their penitence, and asked pardon.

Then, having been taken to Foligno to restore his failing health by the change of air, he experienced some alleviation of his sufferings. Soon, however, it was revealed to him that he would suffer for two years more, and

after that he would enter into everlasting rest. Intoxicated with joy, he composed the following verse with which he ended the canticle:

"Blessed be Thou, O Lord, for our Sister, Bodily Death,
From which may no man that liveth escape;
Woe unto them that shall die in deadly sin;
Blessed they that shall conform to Thy most holy will,
For them the second death harmeth not.

Praise and bless our Lord and thank Him
And serve Him with all lowliness."

The Canticle of the Sun is quoted for the first time by Bartholomew of Pisa, in a book written in 1385, one hundred and sixty years after the death of the saint, and yet no one can dispute its authenticity. This fashion of composing little by little, according to the inspiration of the heart and the need of the moment, is after the manner of great poets such as Dante and Camoens, who carried with them into exile and into far countries the work which they had conceived, and added to it day by day phrases inflamed by passionate grief or hope. The poem of St. Francis is quite short and yet his whole soul is poured out in it: his brotherly love for the creatures,

the charity which inspired this humble and retiring spirit in times of public strife; that infinite love which, after having sought God in nature and having served Him through suffering humanity, had no further aspiration than to find Him in death. Through that canticle we gain a glimpse of the earthly paradise of Umbria, where the sky is so golden and the ground so carpeted with flowers. The language possesses all the spontaneity of primitive speech, and its crude rhythm is that of a poesy in an early stage of development which yet is pleasing to indulgent ears. Sometimes rhyme is replaced by assonance, sometimes it only occurs in the middle and at the end of the verse. The fastidious will have some difficulty in discovering the regular laws of a lyrical composition. It is only a cry, but it is the first cry of a nascent poesy which will develop and make itself heard through the whole world.

Of a very different character is another poem quoted by St. Bernardino of Siena and attributed by him to St. Francis. Bernardino who lived in the century after that which gave birth to the holy founder, but who was enrolled from his early youth in the Franciscan family,

may be regarded as a faithful interpreter of the legends which that family has preserved. This work, divided into ten strophes of seven lines each of a very simple construction, with a regular number of syllables and of rhymes generally correct, revealed the work of an able hand, perhaps of a disciple bidden to retouch the master's composition. But beneath the surface is to be found all the strength of the genius of St. Francis, all the precision of his language, and indeed the unmistakable impress of the destiny which marked his person with the miraculous seal—that ecstasy in which the servant of God, while praying on Mount Alvernia, saw approaching him from the heavens a six-winged figure on a cross. And as this vision brought him an inexpressible consolation mingled with extreme grief, he found that his hands and feet were pierced with nails, whose round black heads and bent points could be felt. Those who will allow nothing supernatural in history may deny this fact; they cannot eliminate the testimony of innumerable witnesses who vouched for it by oath, or destroy the pictures of Giotto which immortalise it, or tear up the poem which follows, and which

seems to be instinct with the fire of divine ecstasy:

"Love has thrust me in the furnace, Love has thrust me in the furnace; he has plunged me in the furnace of love.

"My new spouse, the beloved Lamb, has wed me with the nuptial ring; then, having cast me into prison, he pierced me with his dart, and has broken my heart.

"He has broken my heart and I am cast to the ground. Those arrows discharged from the crossbow of Love have wounded and inflamed me.

"Instead of granting me peace, he has made war upon me; I die of Love's sweet pain.

"I die of yearning. Be not astonished. These wounds are inflicted by the sword of Love. Behold the blade is long and wide as an hundred braces: it has pierced me through.

"Then the darts rained upon me so thickly, that I was o'erwhelmed with the agony. Then I raised my shield, but the shafts followed so closely upon each other that it afforded me no protection; they have broken my body, so strong was the arm that drew them.

"He aimed them so surely that I despaired

of parrying them, and I cried with all my strength that I might escape into the arms of death: 'Thou dost violate the rules of the joust.' But he designed an instrument of war which overwhelmed me with fresh assaults.

"The darts which he shot were of stone covered with lead, each one of which weighed fully a thousand pounds; he rained them thick as hail so that I was not able to count them. No one of them missed the mark.

"He never failed to pierce me, so truly could he aim. I was prostrate on the earth, and had no power to support my limbs. My body was broken and without feeling, like that of a dead man.

"Killed, not by physical death, but by excess of joy. Then, regaining power over my body, my strength was renewed so that I could follow the guides who were leading me to the court of heaven.

"After I had revived, straightway I armed myself, and made war on Christ; I rode into His territory, and, meeting Him, I closed with Him and took a speedy vengeance upon Him.

"When I was avenged, I made a truce with

Him: for from the outset Christ had loved me with an ardent love. Now is my heart enabled to seek consolation in Christ.

"Love has cast me into the furnace, Love has thrust me into the furnace; he has plunged me into the furnace of love."

Most certainly what passed between God and St. Francis on Mount Alvernia could not be translated into the human tongue. But when the saint on descending from this new Sinai gave expression to his transports in a lyric song, it is not astonishing to find in it once more his customary train of thought and the rich colours of his imagination. We meet again the adventurous young man of Assisi, who renounced the service of Walter of Brienne in order to become the knight-errant of Divine Love; we recognise him readily when he describes his ecstasy as an assault at arms, and his flight towards the sky as a journey through the kingdom of Christ.

St. Bernardino of Siena quotes another canticle still more significant, comprising three hundred and sixty-two lines, but divided into stanzas of ten lines each, with rhymes care-

fully arranged. There are indications of a more modern origin, indeed that same poem has been attributed to the blessed Jacopone da Todi, who died in 1306 at the time when Italian poetry, ripened by the sun of the thirteenth century, already bore abundant fruit.

Moreover, the precision and simplicity which stamp the works of St. Francis are lacking. Yet in order to reconcile all traditions we may conclude that the blessed penitent of Todi paraphrased, with his natural versatility and with the subtlety of his time, a simple and noble thought which he borrowed from some old song of St. Francis, just as the followers of a musician reproduce in a series of variations the motif given by the master. We can confirm this theory by considering the following dialogue between Christ and St. Francis in which is the characteristic extract:

The Soul or Francis.

"Would that my senses might ne'er be restored, if Love makes me to act as one possessed!

"Weak is the heart of him who would

defend himself, who would escape from such a Love ! . . .

"For heaven and earth cry out to me unceasingly, and all beings to whom I owe love exhort me: Love love, who has made us to lure thee to him. . . ."

Christ.

"Set love in order, if thou lovest Me. Virtue can ne'er exist in disorder, and all created things have I fashioned with number and measure, all are ordered to their final end. . . . Can it be then, O Christian Soul, that thou hast become demented through excess of zeal? Thou hast passed the bounds of order, and thy fervour has known no curb."

The Soul or Francis.

"O Christ! Thou hast despoiled me of my heart, and Thou biddest me to set in order my soul ! . . . Thou also hast yielded Thyself to Love. Thou hast descended from heaven to earth through the wiles of Love; Thou hast e'en abased Thyself to pass through the world as a man despised. Thou hast desired neither shelter nor possession, but poverty alone for our enrichment.

"In life e'en as in death, Thou hast shown that a boundless Love has consumed Thy heart.

"Oft hast Thou paced the earth like a drunken man; Love has led Thee as his slave.

"In all things hast Thou been ruled by Love, nor ever hast Thou thought upon Thyself. . . .

"And I know well that when Thou didst not speak, nor justify Thyself in the presence of Pilate, Thou wast moved by the desire to win our salvation on the cross erected by Love."

Even if the three poems which have just been quoted belonged in their entirety to St. Francis, they would still seem to be but a poor product of such a long preparation and a mere five hundred lines a feeble expression of such a zealous life. However, if the servant of God waited till the eighteenth year of his conversion to unburden his soul and to voice his songs, one need no longer be surprised at their small number. St. Francis lived only two years longer; and during that time he was wholly obsessed by ecstasies

of the soul and tortures of the body, beyond human power of expression.

At length, on the 4th of October, in the year 1226, began his final agony, and, after having the Canticle of the Sun chanted to him once more, he breathed his last. But it is the great privilege of saints and poets that death opens for them even on earth a new life, for before the time of mourning is past, the glorious dead begin to thrill the world, their words and their examples serve to incite from generation to generation disciples to interpret and imitate them; so that, in order to be just to them, one must credit them, not only with the works which they have left, but also with the followers they have inspired.

The poetic mission of St. Francis, eclipsed by other cares during his lifetime, never shone more brightly than in the century after his death. He had chosen for himself a burial-place on a hill to the east of Assisi called the Hill of Hell, where criminals were executed. But they had no sooner laid him in the tomb than an irresistible thrill stirred the world and became the inspiration of many minds. Pope Gregory IX placed him among the

saints, and decreed that his resting-place should be called the Hill of Paradise. From that time no honours were too great for this humble saint; people remembered his love for them, and wished to reward him richly for all the sacrifices he had made on their behalf. And, though he had had neither shelter nor servant, they caused to be built for him a magnificent resting-place like the palace he had dreamed of in his youth, where might be seen entering into his service all the workmen most skilled in Christian art. As a rule, Catholicism thinks she has done enough for a saint when she has placed his shrine on the altar of a church named after him. For the poor man of Assisi the rock had to be hollowed out to an unusual depth in order to protect the body from the risk of those thefts of relics which were so frequent in mediæval times. Immediately over the tomb was erected a basilica to receive the crowd of pilgrims, and over that again a second from which prayers might ascend more quickly to heaven. A northern architect, Jacopo Tedesco, came to build this double edifice; and applied to it all the resources of Gothic art, all the traditions of Christian symbolism.

He designed the lower basilica in the form of a solid nave without ornament, with sur-based arcades and openings which admit only a dim light, as if to recall the life of penitence of St. Francis on earth. He built the upper church with thinner walls, with bold arches, and with long windows through which the light streams in, as if to represent the glorious life of St. Francis in heaven. The form of a monument was designed to represent the Cross of Our Saviour; the walls were of white marble to symbolise the purity of the Virgin, and were flanked by twelve turrets of red marble in memory of the martyrdom of the apostles. The bell-tower was topped by an imposing spire which filled the next generation with anxiety. They pulled it down, but the name of Jacopo Tedesco remained famous; posterity honoured him as the master of the great Arnolfo who was to build the most beautiful edifices of Florence, and was to open a new epoch in the history of architecture.

But the people of the Middle Ages were not satisfied that they had completed the monument when they had raised one stone upon another; these stones were to speak in

the language of painting, intelligible to the ignorant and the humble. Heaven was to be made visible there, and angels and saints were to be represented in the form of images, for the comfort and instruction of the people. The arches of the two basilicas of Assisi are adorned with a covering of azure spangled with stars of gold. On the walls are depicted the mysteries of the two Testaments, and the life of St. Francis is represented side by side with the book of divine revelations. But it was soon proved impossible to approach the miraculous tomb with impunity, for the very painters commissioned to adorn it with frescoes felt within them the stirrings of a new spirit; they began to conceive a purer ideal and one more living than breathed from the old Byzantine pictures. These latter had had their period of greatness, but for the last eight hundred years Byzantine art had steadily declined. The basilica of Assisi became the cradle of a Renaissance, and witnessed all the stages of its development. There Guido of Siena and Giunta of Pisa broke away by degrees from the Greek masters, whose hardness they softened and whose immobility they transformed into life. Cimabue followed

in their wake. He represented all epochs of sacred history in a series of pictures which decorated the upper church, and which time has defaced. But six hundred years have not tarnished the splendour of the heads of Christ, the Virgin, and of St. John, which he painted on the roofs of the arches, nor the figures of the four great doctors in which Byzantine dignity is skilfully combined with a new spirit of life and immortal youth. Finally Giotto appeared, and one of his works was the "Triumph of St. Francis," painted in four frescoes under the arch above the altar of the lower church. These beautiful frescoes may be the most celebrated, but there is none more touching than the one which represents the marriage of the servant of God with holy Poverty, Poverty who figures as a woman of perfect beauty, but with an emaciated face and with ragged garments. A dog barks at her, two children throw stones at her, and scatter thorns on her path. She, however, calm and joyous, stretches out her hand to Francis; Christ Himself unites the two lovers; and in the clouds appear the Eternal Father and a host of angels, as if it were only fitting that heaven and earth should unite in

celebrating the nuptials of these two beggars. In this painting there is no trace of Greek art; all is fresh, spontaneous, and inspired. The progress of the new art does not cease with those followers of Giotto who were commissioned to continue his work—Cavallini, Taddeo Gaddi, Puccio Capanna. Varied as their works are, they reveal the common faith which inspired them in their art. When we pause before those chaste representations of the Virgin, the Annunciation, the Nativity, before Christ crucified, with the angels weeping at the foot of the Cross or catching in vessels the divine blood, our hearts would indeed be hard if tears did not well in our eyes, if we did not kneel by the side of the priests and the poor women who pray at the foot of these sacred pictures. Then only do we perceive that St. Francis is the true master of the school of Assisi; and we realise the ardour and power which he bestowed as a heritage upon it. We understand how Giotto's art was evolved from it, and how it inspired him to begin that mission the importance of which is not sufficiently recognised, but which nevertheless establishes his claim to greatness. It was this mission

which led him to Pisa, Padua, Naples, and Avignon, and in each town which he visited he left not only products of his genius, but many disciples to study them, surpass them, and to spread through the whole of Italy that new inspiration which was to be her final triumph.

The inspiration which had had the power to give rise to this fruitful school of painting and architecture was to beget other efforts. If we have dwelt at length on this renaissance of the arts, it is because we recognise it to be the forerunner of a great period of literature. When a people busies itself with hewing stone in the quarries, and forming it into colonnades, pointed arches and spires, covering the walls of its buildings with pictures and mosaics, and leaving no corner without some figure or emblem, it is at once obvious that this people is prompted by a thought which lies deeper than architectural symbolism, which expresses more than is revealed by the mere outline of the design, and which will soon find a more exact and harmonious expression in language. In the train of these great artists who have just passed in procession before our minds, we shall see a whole generation of poets descending from the hill of Assisi.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

Page 49. The sources consulted for this chapter are primarily the writings of St. Francis, *Opera sancti Francisci;* secondly, the three biographies of the saint: that written two years after his death by Thomas of Celano; that of the three disciples who were charged with the completion of this first edition; lastly, that of St. Bonaventura composed shortly after with contemporary traditions and from numerous other documents. *Cf.* also Wadding, *Anneles Minorum,* t. i.; Chavin de Malan, *Histoire de Saint François d'Assise.* Goerres has written scholarly and ingenious articles on *Saint François d'Assise troubadour.* OZANAM.

Page 49. *Frederick II* (1194–1250), Holy Roman Emperor and King of Sicily, distinguished from his "barbarian" predecessors by his knowledge and culture. He founded the university of Naples, and, in order to spread abroad in his kingdom the knowledge of ancient philosophy, he had many Arabian and Greek manuscripts translated into Latin, and may be said to be instrumental in introducing Aristotle to the West. He fostered, too, the study of rhetoric, and many members of his court, in particular Pietro della Vigne, were masters of the art. He gathered round him a band of poets, and himself wrote Italian poems after the style of Provençal love-poetry. Yet with all his culture he was a sceptic, indeed the papal party accused him of being a heretic and an atheist, and Dante, in spite of his admiration and respect for Frederick, placed him in hell. See "Inferno," canto x.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

Page 50. *Pietro della Vigne.*—A poet of no mean order, and chancellor of the Emperor Frederick II. He rose to a high place in his master's favour as a counsellor during his long struggle with the papacy. Through the jealousy of other courtiers he was accused of betraying the Emperor's secrets to the Pope and of conspiring to poison him. Frederick believed the charges, blinded him by forcing him to hold his face over red-hot irons, and threw him into prison at Pisa, where he anticipated the death by stoning to which he was sentenced by dashing his head against the wall of his dungeon. Dante, who places him in the Forest of Suicides ("Inferno," canto xiii.), condemns his suicide but vindicates his character, which had been defamed by slanderous tongues.

Page 50. *Manfred.*—See Dante's "Purgatorio," canto iii.

Page 50. *Manzoni, Alessandro* (1785–1873).—An Italian poet and novelist. After leading a dissipated life in early youth, he consecrated his later life to religion and literature. He desired to make his work a literary defence of the Catholic faith. This aim is illustrated in a series of "Inni Sacri" to celebrate the chief feasts of the Church. In these, in the true romantic spirit, he brought back the old mediæval simplicity into Italian religious poetry.

Page 51. *Brunetto Latini* (*c.* 1220).—A Florentine philosopher and statesman of great eloquence. After the battle of Montaperti he was banished with the other Guelfs and retired to Paris. While there he wrote in French an encyclopædia of the knowledge of his time, or, as he himself styled it, "a condensation of all the many parts of philosophy to a short summary." He called the book *Le trésors,* and wrote it in French, but it was soon

translated into Italian. Dante was among those who came under his influence, and in one of the most pathetic episodes of the "Inferno" (canto xv.) Dante describes the master who had taught him "how men may stride into Eternity," as being among the sinners against nature.

Page 51. *Guido Cavalcanti* (born *c.* 1250), whom Dante calls "the first of my friends" and to whom he dedicated the *Vita Nuova,* was himself a poet of some note. For examples of his poetry, see *The Early Italian Poets,* translated by D. G. Rossetti.

Page 51. *Guido Guinicelli* (born 1276) was the greatest Italian poet before Dante, who hails him as "his sweet master" and repeatedly praises his "dolce stil nuovo." Some of Dante's finest verses are imitations of Guido's, and his celebrated canzone "Of the Gentle Heart," on the origin of Love, might be called the prototype of the new school of poetry.

"Within the gentle heart Love shelters him,
As birds within the green shade of the grove.
Before the gentle heart, in Nature's scheme,
Love was not, nor the gentle heart ere Love. . . ."

Dante continually quotes this canzone (*V.N.,* 20; *Conv,* iv. 20; *De V.E.,* i. 9, ii. 5; *cf.* "Inf." v. 100).

Page 51. *Guittone d'Arezzo* (1230–1294) was a member of the order of Frati Gaudenti, or Cavalieri di Maria, and is the most characteristic representative of the oldest kind of Tuscan poetry. Dante speaks of him (*V.E.,* i. 13, ii. 6) as wanting in refinement, and in "Purgatorio," xxvi. 124, notes his popularity as an instance of how judgment is overruled by fashion. Petrarch, however (*Rime Ant.,* pp. 243–68), groups him with Dante. His earliest works

were love-poems after the model of the troubadours, but, after his rejection of worldly pleasures, he reviled earthly love and, in its place, extolled the true love of God. The best example of this change of tone is his sonnet to the Blessed Virgin Mary:

> "Lady of Heaven, the Mother glorified
> Of glory, which is Jesus . . .
> . . . O inspire in me that Holy Love
> Which leads the soul back to its origin,
> Till of all other love the link do fail. . ."

Page 53. *Propertius* (*c.* 56 B.C.), a native of Mevania in Umbria, devoted his life to poetry and soon gained a reputation among contemporary poets and the friendship of Ovid, though his style is now judged to be artificial and his language often very obscure. His elegiacs have been translated into English verse.

Page 54. *Rambaut de Vacqueiras*, a Provençal troubadour, came at the end of the twelfth century to the court of Marquis Boniface of Montferrat, by whom he was received with great honour and whose brother-in-arms he became. While in the service of Boniface he composed much poetry, and in many of his poems celebrated Beatrice, the sister of the Marquis.

Page 54. *Provençal Poetry.*—The poetry of the Provençal troubadours was essentially lyrical and assumed many different forms, of which the following are the chief:

Fabliaux.—A realistic tale in verse dealing with commonplace incidents in everyday life.

The Serventes.—"The song of a serving-man in praise or in the interest of his master" and devoted generally to moral and political topics, in contrast to the *Canso* which treated only with the subject of love.

Donizo, who wrote in verse the story of the Countess Matilda, knew the French epic romances from the beginning of the twelfth century: "Francorum prosa sunt edita bella senora." For the journeys of the Provençal troubadours in Italy, cf. *Histoire de la poésie provençale*, par M. Fauriel, t. ii., and three articles published by the same scholar in the *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, t. iii. and iv. OZANAM.

Fauriel's *Histoire de la poésie provençale* (Paris, 1846, 3 vols., 8vo.) is now quite out of date, also Fauriel founds his book on the supposition that the south of France possesses a voluminous epic literature. Further, he omits many of the most important Provençal poets.

EDITOR'S NOTE.

Page 55. *The Legend of St. Francis*, by the Three Companions, chap. ii. 4: "On a time when war was being waged between Perugia and Assisi, Francis was taken prisoner with many of his fellow-citizens." *Ibid.*, chap. i.: "Francis . . . was at first named John by his mother; then whenas his father, in whose absence he was born, returned from France, he was afterward named Francis."

Page 55. *Francis.*—"Francis was first named John, but after his name was changed and was called Francis. The cause of changing his name was manifold. First, for the reason of his marvellous changing, for it is known that he received of God, by miracle, the French tongue, and it is said in his legend that when he was replenished of the grace of God, and of the ardour of the Holy Ghost, he pronounced out burning words in French. Secondly, by the reason to publish his office, whereof is said in his legend that the divine providence gave to him that name

because of his singular and unaccustomed name, the opinion of his mystery might be known throughout all the world. Thirdly, by reason of his office in effect, whereupon was given to understand that by him and by his sons he should make many servants of the devil and bond to sin, free. Fourthly, by reason of great courage and magnanimity of heart. For Frenchmen be said of fierceness, for in them is natural fierceness and great courage of heart. Fifthly, by reason of virtuosity in speaking, for his word carved away the vices like an axe. Sixthly, by reason that he chased away commonly the devils. Seventhly, by reason of honesty in his conversation, and of perfection of work. And it is said that some signs that were borne in Rome tofore the Consuls, which were in terror of the people and in worship, were called Francisas."—Voragine's *Golden Legend.*

Later authorities, such as Jörgensen, question the traditional theory that the father of St. Francis invented the name.

Page 55. "When I find the most holy names of the Lord or His written words in unholy places, I will take them away and house them seemly wise; and I beg others to do in like manner."—*Testament of St. Francis.*

Page 55. *Thomas of Celano,* chap. xxix., 82: "My son, it is because the letters are there whereof the most glorious name of the Lord God is composed. The good, therefore, that is in the writing belongs not to the pagans nor to any men, but to God alone, of whom is all good."

Page 56. *The Legend of St. Francis,* by the Three Companions, chap. iii., 10: "Standing on the church steps with the other beggars, he asked alms in French,

for he loved to speak the French tongue, albeit he spake it not alright." Cf. *The Life of St. Francis*, by St. Bonaventura, chap. ii. 5; *Thomas of Celano*, chap. vii. 16.

Page 57. *Legend of St. Francis*, by the Three Companions: "He was a merrier man than was his father, and more generous, given unto jests and songs, going round the city of Assisi day and night . . . so that he seemed rather the son of some mighty prince."

Wadding, *Annale Minorum*, i.: "Cives Assiates eum vocabant juvenum florem."

Page 58. *Walter de Brienne.*—The leader of the papal forces during the struggle between Pope Innocent III, and the General Markwald, for the regency of king and kingdom during the minority of Frederick II. He overcame the Germans in a number of battles, and his fame spread over all Italy. The inspiration of his name reached even Assisi, and one of the nobles of Assisi armed himself to go with a troop to aid Walter's army and infected Francis with his zeal. Francis was, however, attacked by fever on the journey and was warned by a vision to desert the banner of Walter for that of God.

Page 58. *Legend of St. Francis*, by the Three Companions, chap. ii. 5: "I know I shall be a great prince."

Thomas of Celano: "It seemed to him that he had his house full of warlike weapons, to wit, saddles, shields, lances, and other accoutrements . . . he was told that all these arms were his and his knights."

Cf. *Legend of St. Francis*, by the Three Companions, chap. ii.; *Life*, by St. Bonaventura, xiii. 9: "Up, then, most valiant knight of Christ! Bear the armour of that most invincible Captain. . . . Now, verily, is that first

vision fulfilled, which thou sawest, to wit, that thou shouldst become a captain in the warfare of Christ, and shouldst be accoutred with heavenly armour, marked with the sign of the Cross." These thoughts are so familiar to the disciples of St. Francis, that in 1687 a Spanish Franciscan, Gabriel of Mata, printed a poem with this title:

"*El Cavallero Asisio, en el vocimiento, vida e muerte del serafico padre san Francesco, en octava rima.*" See Chavin de Malan, p. 16 of the supplement.

Page 60. The mystic marriage of St. Francis with the Lady Poverty is mentioned by all the early Franciscan writers. St. Bonaventura's account is the best known, but one of the most interesting of the early records is the "Sacrum Commercium Beati Francisci cum Domina Paupertate," attributed by some to John of Parma. Later, Jacopone made verses on the same theme, and Dante refers to it in "Paradiso," xi. 64–75, in a few beautiful lines.

Page 60. "The Mater Dolorosa stood by the Cross, but as the Crucified One hung there, naked and bleeding, Poverty also was with Him."

Page 60. *Legend of St. Francis,* by the Three Companions, chap. iii. 7: "Perchance wast thou thinking of taking a wife?" . . . "Truly have ye spoken, for that I thought of taking unto me a bride nobler and richer and fairer than ever ye have seen. And they mocked at him. Cf. *Thomas of Celano,* chap. iii. 7.

St. Bonaventura, vii. 6: "In the privilege of Poverty, whom he was wont to name now his mother, now his lady."—The Treasure of Poverty, *Little Flowers of St. Francis,* chap. xiii.; Prayer of St. Francis for Lady Poverty, *Works of St. Francis.*

Page 63. *Rota.*—A species of psaltery or dulcimer or primitive zither, employed in the Middle Ages in Church music. It was played with the hand, guitar fashion, and had seven strings mounted in a solid wooden frame. GROVE.

Page 63. *Thomas of Celano,* lxxxix. 126.

St. Bonaventura, v. 11: "On a sudden was heard the sound of a lyre of wondrous harmony and sweetest tune. No one was to be seen, but the coming and going of a lyrist was betokened by the volume of sound, now here, now there." See also *The Little Flowers of St. Francis.*

Page 64. *Wolfram von Eschenbach,* the most important and individual poet of mediæval Germany, flourished during the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century. He was attached to the court of the Landgrave Hermann of Thuringia, and formed one of the brilliant group of Minnesingers in the castle of the Wartburg. His fame rests on two long epic poems, *Parzival,* immeasurably the finest and most spiritual rendering of the Parceval Grail story, and *Willehalm,* a translation of the French Chanson de Geste *Aliscans.*

Page 65. *Thomas of Celano,* ii. 3: "And when now he was somewhat restored, after he had begun to walk about the house in order to recover his strength, leaning on a stick, one day he went abroad and began to look curiously on the landscape around. But neither the beauty of the fields, the pleasantness of the vineyards, nor anything that is fair to see could in anywise delight him."

Page 67. *Legend of St. Francis,* by the Three Companions, v. 14: "I weep for the Passion of my Lord Jesus Christ, for Whom I ought not to be ashamed to go mourning aloud throughout the whole world." Cf. *St. Bonaventura,* ix.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

Page 69. "How salt that bread dost taste thou then shalt know that others give thee, and how hard the way, or up or down another's stairs to go."—"Paradiso," xvii. 58–60. Cf. *St. Bonaventura,* vii., viii.

Page 71. *Thomas of Celano,* chap. xxviii. 79.

St. Bonaventura, viii. 6: "When he bethought him of the first beginning of all things, he was filled with a yet more overflowing charity, and would call the dumb animals, howsoever small, by the names of *brother* and *sister.*" *Ibid.* chap. ix.: "He triumphed in all the works of the Lord's hands, and through the sight of their joy was uplifted unto their life-giving cause and origin. He beheld in fair things Him who is most fair, and, through the traces of Himself that He hath implanted on His creatures, he everywhere followed on to reach the Beloved, making of all things a ladder for himself whereby he might ascend to lay hold on Him Who is the altogether lovely."

Page 73. *Saint Gall,* Saint (Cellach, or Caillech), born in Ireland about 550; died at St. Gall, Switzerland, about 645. An Irish missionary, apostle to the Suevi and the Alamanni, a pupil of St. Columba whom he accompanied to Gaul in 586. He afterwards founded the monastery of St. Gall.

Page 73. *St. Columba,* born in Ireland in 521, was a Celtic missionary in Scotland and was surnamed "the Apostle of Caledonia." He founded the monastery of Iona in about 565.

Page 73. *The Fathers of the Thebaid.*—During the fourth and fifth centuries the upper part of the valley of the Nile was the chosen land of the monks, who by their sanctity greatly influenced the East and West. The

hermit-life was introduced into the Thebaid by St. Anthony, who, impelled by a love of solitude, buried himself in the desert. The fame of his sanctity drew round him disciples who imitated his mode of life. They lived in huts scattered in groups, took vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience; wore a dress distinct from that of secular persons, and divided their day between manual work and spiritual exercises. These monks disappeared with the fall of the Byzantine domination and the success of the Saracen invaders.

Page 74. *St. Bonaventura,* chaps. vii., viii., ix., xii.

Thomas of Celano, chap. xxi. 58: "Being now, by grace, become simple (though he was not so by nature) he began to charge himself with negligence for not having preached to the birds before, since they listened so reverently to God's word." Cf. *Vita sancta Galli; Vita sancta Columbani;* auctore Iona Bobbiensi, apud Pertz, *Monumenta Germaniæ historica,* t. ii. OZANAM.

Page 77. *Eccelino da Romano* (1194–1259), Ghibelline leader and supporter of the Emperor Frederick II, whose daughter he married and who appointed him Imperial Vicar of Treviso. Eccelino stands out even among the tyrants of his age. He was known in popular legends as the Child of the Devil. His death was an appropriate ending to a life of cruelty. When on his way to attack Milan he was taken captive, and while in prison he refused all food, tore the bandages off his wounds and died. So great was his reputation for cruelty that he gained a place in Dante's "Inferno," in among the tyrants "who plunged in blood and rapine's worst extreme."

Page 77. *Ugolino.*—In 1288 the Guelfs were para-

mount in Pisa, but they were divided into two parties, one led by Ugolino and the other by his grandson Nino. In order to obtain supreme authority, Ugolino made a coalition with Ruggieri, Archbishop of Pisa and head of the Ghibelline party. Nino was driven out of Pisa and Ugolino ruled supreme until he was treacherously betrayed by the Archbishop, who turned the tide of popular feeling against him and had him imprisoned with four of his sons and grandsons in a tower where they were left to starve to death. Dante tells the story at length in "Inferno," canto xxxiii., and forcibly describes the long-drawn-out agony of mind and body of Ugolino in the following lines:

"I heard the locking of the tower gate
Of that dread tower, and then awhile I stared
In my sons' faces speechless, desolate.
I wept not; all within as stone grew hard.
They wept, and then my Anselmuccio said,
'What ails thee, Father? Why this fixed regard?'
And still I shed no tear, nor answer made
All that long day, nor yet the following night,
Till the next sun was o'er the world displayed;
And when there came a little ray of light
Into the dolorous prison, and I knew
My own face by four faces' piteous plight;
Then both my hands in anguish I gnawed through." . . .

Page 77. *The Sicilian Vespers.*—A wholesale massacre of the French followers of Charles of Anjou who had conquered Sicily, and who had roused the indignation of the Sicilians to fever-heat by their insolence. The immediate cause occurred at Palermo on Easter Monday, 1282, when a French soldier grossly insulted a Sicilian

bride. The exasperated crowd turned upon the Frenchmen scattered throughout the town, and thus began a massacre which spread through the whole island.

Page 78. *Orpheus,* presented with the lyre by Apollo, enchanted with its music not only the wild beasts, but the trees and rocks upon Olympus, so that they moved from their places to follow its sound.

Page 78. *St. Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio.*—For the story of the miracle wrought by St. Francis on the fierce wolf of Gubbio, see *The Little Flowers of St. Francis,* chap. xxi. There we are told how St. Francis made over him the sign of the Cross and spoke to him thus: "Come hither, brother wolf. I command thee in the name of Christ that thou do no harm, nor to me nor to anyone." Whereupon the "terrible wolf shut his jaws and stayed his running, and when he was bid came gently as a lamb and lay him down at the feet of St. Francis."

Page 79. *St. Bonaventura on St. Francis' voice when speaking of Christ.*—In St. Bonaventura's *Life of St. Francis,* he tells us that when St. Francis "uttered or heard the Name of Jesus, he was filled with an inward rejoicing, and seemed all transfigured outwardly, as though some honey-sweet taste had smoothed his palate, or some melodious sound his ear" (chap. x. par. 6).

Brother Leo, the "little sheep of God," after his conversion to the Order, became the secretary and confessor of St. Francis and was his faithful friend and companion. It was to Brother Leo that St. Francis gave as a keepsake the famous blessing, afterwards looked on as a miracle-working charm: "The Lord bless thee and

keep thee; the Lord make His Face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." The words that follow *Dominus benedicat f. Leo te* are in the handwriting of Francis, the cross in the shape of T being his customary signature.

Page 79. Wadding, *Annales*, ad ann. 1224; Bartholomæus Pisanus, *Liber conformitatum*. Part 2, fol. ii. (Milan edition, 1510). There is a treatise dealing with the authenticity of the poems of St. Francis by P. Affo, quoted by Tiraboschi, but it has been impossible for me to consult it. OZANAM.

Page 79. Jörgensen in his *St. Francis of Assisi* states: "That *In foco amor mi mise* and *Amor di caritade* were not by St. Francis, but by Jacopone da Todi, was known to Pater Ireneo Affo a hundred years before the modern North European philosophers knew it."

Page 82. The text of the poem presents a kind of rhythmical prose which might be written thus:

"Altissimo, omnipotente, bon Signore:
Tue son le laude la gloria, lo honore;
E ogni benedictione . . .
Laudato sia mio Signore per suora luna, e per le stelle,
Il quale in cielo le hai formate chiare e belle. . . ."

OZANAM.

Page 83. Bartholomew of Pisa wrote a remarkable book called the *Conformities* which is a great treasury of Franciscan lore, and of which the following edition is extant: *Liber conformitatum*, Mediolani, 1510.

Page 83. Saint Bernardino, *Opera*, t. iv., sermon 4. *Cf.* Bolland, t. ii. oct. p. 1003. OZANAM.

Page 83. *St. Bernardino of Siena,* born of a noble family in 1380, the year of St. Catherine's death, may be said to have carried on her work. For forty years this zealous follower of St. Francis wandered over Italy preaching repentance and reconciling peoples and princes. "He converted and changed the minds and spirits of men marvellously," writes a contemporary, "a wonderful power he had in persuading men to lay aside their mortal hatreds." He was offered the bishopric of his native town, but refused it because he felt he could get into closer touch with the people as a friar, and the traces of his widespread influence still remain in the numbers of signs of the Divine Name which adorn even the humblest houses of those towns in which he ministered. The monogram I.H.S. surrounded by rays owes its popularity to his preaching. It represents the Holy Name written in a Greek abbreviated form.

Page 87. Saint Bernardino, *Opera,* t. iv., sermon 16; Jacopone, *L.,* c. xvi. He treats of the canticle which begins thus:

"Amor de caritate,
Perche m'hai si ferito?
Lo cor tutto partito,
E arde per amore."

OZANAM.

Page 93. *Arnolfo,* sometimes called di Cambio and sometimes di Lapi, was the first of the group of cathedral builders in Florence. Nothing authentic is known about his life, though few architects after him have left greater works. The first definite record of him is as one of the band of workmen engaged upon the pulpit in the Duomo at Siena, as pupil of Niccolo Pisano, but

his principal work was in Florence. There the traces of his genius may be seen in the Palazzo Vecchio, the Santa Croce, and what remains of the walls of the city. It was about the year 1294 that he was employed to build the Duomo, and his plan of it may be seen in Simone Memmi's great picture in the Spanish chapel at Santa Maria Novella. He lived to see only a portion of this, his greatest work, completed—"the three principal tribunes which were under the cupola."

Page 93. Vasari, *Vita d'Arnolfo;* Petrus Rodulphus, *Historia seraphicæ religionis,* lib. ii. p. 247; *Descrizione del santuario d'Assisi,* Assisi, 1835. OZANAM.

Page 94. *Guido of Siena.*—The name of this Italian painter is of considerable interest in the history of art as, if certain assumptions regarding him are true, he is entitled to rank with Cimabue, or even to supersede him, as the pioneer of the new school of painting. These assumptions are based on the fact that on the rhymed Latin inscription beneath a famous picture in the Benedictine convent at Siena giving the painter's name as Gu . . . o de Senis the date inscribed is 1221, and not 1281 as some maintain. In this picture the heads of the Madonna and Child are very superior in dignity and general character to anything to be found anterior to Cimabue. Guido appears always to have painted on panel, not in fresco on the wall.

Page 94. *Giunta of Pisa* (1202–1256), a painter of no great fame, but one whose work marks the breaking away from the fetters of Byzantine mannerism. In the Upper Church of San Francesco are some wall-paintings by him, nearly covered by re-paint, and representing

the martyrdom of St. Peter and the "Destruction of Simon Magus," in which there is distinct feeling for a purer form and livelier colouring than had been evinced by an earlier painter.

Pages 94 and 95. *Cimabue.*—Rumohr and other competent authorities of his day declare that there is no reliable evidence for ascribing any of the pictures in the Upper Church at Assisi to Cimabue. See Rumohr, *op. cit.*, tom. i. par. 8.

Many other modern critics go further and assert that no existing painting can be definitely ascribed to Cimabue.

Page 96. *Giotto,* the greatest of the Tuscan painters, who brought to maturity the work begun by Giunta of Pisa and Cimabue, and exercised a lasting influence on the development of Italian painting. According to Ghiberti and Vasari he served his apprenticeship under Cimabue at Florence. The best examples of his early work are to be found in the Upper Church at Assisi, in frescoes illustrating the life of St. Francis, but his more mature work adorns the Lower Church. It is, however, the fine series of pictures which covers the Arena Chapel at Padua which reveals the full strength of his genius. They combine the highest excellence of technique with a supreme and sympathetic understanding of human life and passions.

Page 96. *Taddeo Gaddi,* one of the followers of Giotto, and the oldest and steadiest champion of the Giottesque style. His genius was never original, but he had the power of reproducing the manner of his master, and on that gift rests his fame. His art was purely conventional and is marked by an absence of religious feeling. Some

of his most characteristic work is to be seen in the Baroncelli Chapel at the Santa Croce.

Page 96. *Puccio Capanna,* also a follower of Giotto. Among the many works ascribed to him are a series of frescoes in the Maddalena Chapel in the Lower Church of Assisi. The most important of his authentic works is to be seen in the choir of San Francesco of Pistoja, where he painted scenes of the life of St. Francis.

Page 96. *Cavallini,* born *c.* 1288, a Roman mosaicist and painter. For a long time, on the authority of Vasari, he was judged to be a follower of Giotto, but since the death of Ozanam the beautiful frescoes by him have been discovered in Rome (St. Cecilia in Trastevere), and these are obviously not by a scholar but by a master of Giotto. That he was a student of classical sculpture is shown by the drawing of the drapery in these frescoes, the most remarkable of which is "The Last Judgment." It is probable that some of the frescoes in the Upper Church at Assisi are by Cavallini, but recent authorities have disproved the statement of Vasari that he helped Giotto in painting the frescoes in the Lower Church; no work by him is to be found there.

Page 96. Vasari, *Vita di Cimabue, Vita di Giotto, &c.*; *Descrizione del santuario d'Assisi.* One must not forget Buffalmacco, Giottino, Simoni Memmi, who worked in the side chapels of the Lower Church. OZANAM.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST FOLLOWERS OF SAINT FRANCIS

BROTHER PACIFICUS—SAINT BONAVENTURA—JACOMINO OF VERONA

POETIC inspiration may be born in the silence of the cell, and even on the desolate rocks where St. Francis poured forth his ecstasies in secret; but it can only be developed by the intercourse of men, by the clamorous enthusiasm of the crowd, by the splendour of the festivals which stir a whole nation, and lure them for a moment from the trivial customs of daily life. Italy of the Middle Ages delighted in public festivities which preserved some traces of culture and refinement in an age renowned for its barbarity. From the eleventh and twelfth centuries onward the emperors who had come to receive the crown from the hands of the popes, the kings of Sicily, the Marquis of Este and of Montferrat, had entertained their court with all

manner of pageants of chivalry, tournaments, carousals, horses shod in silver, fountains welling with wine, halls richly decorated, resounding with the melody of the lute, crowded with singers, mimes, and improvisers of verse who departed laden with presents. Later on, when the Lombard towns had obtained by the Treaty of Constance all the prerogatives of sovereignty, when they coined money, raised armies, dispensed justice, they claimed also to hold courts as resplendent as those of the emperors and of the princes whom they had conquered. In 1214, Treviso celebrated her festivals by building an artificial castle hung with purple and ermine. There were quartered a number of dames and damsels who were bidden to defend it without the help of a single man. The attack was made by youths armed with flowers, fruits, and balls, and with little phials filled with perfumes. Deputations from the neighbouring cities helped in the struggle, each under its own banner. About the same time, Venice, Padua, and Genoa also held courts where nobles and plebeians, united as brothers, spent their days in feasting and music on those same public squares which had been so often

stained with blood. The Tuscans imitated these merrymakings, entering into them with all their innate vivacity and nicety of taste. Florence spared nothing when celebrating the feast of her patron saint, John the Baptist. Bands of a thousand persons, clothed in white, processed through the streets with trumpets, under the leadership of a chief called the Lord of Love. Knights and dames formed in joyous circles round the jongleurs, listening to their poems and songs. They taught the art of merrymaking, they discussed questions of chivalry, they gave sentence in affairs of love, they devised allegorical representations in which the malicious little god with his bow and arrows never failed to appear. Later on, Rome herself, the old papal town, emerged from her calm and contemplation to celebrate the passing through of Charles of Anjou and of Conradin, by knightly jousts, triumphal marches, and dances, accompanied by songs, flutes, and tambourines, in which knights in arms and fair ladies took part. Thus music, song, and consequently poesy, figured in every feast. These arts were practised by a class of men called jongleurs, or actors, or "uomini di corte," who grew so numerous that the magis-

trates became anxious. Their alarm was shared by the theologians, and St. Thomas Aquinas decided that their profession was not unlawful if they did not mar it by impurity of word or action. It was a means of livelihood to these men who came from Lombardy, Tuscany, and Sicily to go from court to court, reciting their own poems and those of others, and by so doing they spread their influence throughout the whole of Italy. In these assemblies, which brought face to face Italians from all provinces and of all dialects, was formed that language purified of all provincial idiom, noble and refined like the feasts in which it has its birth, that poetic language which Dante was to use, which he named "illustre, aulica cortigiana," the language of the court, or, to render it more accurately, the language of the feasts.

But Italy had also celebrations of a very different order; another power no less popular than the republics also held court there. On the 26th of May, in the year 1219 and on the day of Pentecost, five thousand men encamped in that smiling valley which is dominated by the terraces of Assisi, under rushes plaited together or in the shade of the woods. The

earth was their bed, a stone their pillow, a sack their covering. They were to be seen in companies of forty or eighty, conversing of God, praying, singing psalms, all radiant with joy. Their emotion infected the crowd of people and of nobles who had come from the neighbouring towns to marvel at so novel a spectacle. "Truly," said they, "this is the camp of God, and the meeting-place of His knights." It was in reality the Chapter-General of the Brothers-minor held by St. Francis. Songs abounded, and we have many illustrations of the ray of poetry which kindled the holy man who had summoned the assembly, who was its life-blood, who had only to breathe upon the crowd to infect it with his own ardour. The Chapters-General were chosen annually at first, then later, once in three years; and when St. Francis had passed to a better life, his spirit continued to preside over these feasts of poverty, in these courts of divine love, where moved an inspired crowd, and where were to be found imaginations freed from earthly cares and all that is most essential for poetic inspiration to spread and propagate itself. We have only to consider for a moment the first days of the Order, to

ST. CLARE.

By Tiberio d'Assisi.

realise how the spirit of the penitent of Assisi breathes everywhere. All the chivalry of his customs, spirit and speech, passed into the traditions of his disciples. The allusions, the metaphors of his discourses became the heritage of his spiritual family. The litanies composed in his honour greet him with all the names which he loved best: the Cavalier of the Crucified Lord, the Gonfalonier of Christ, the General of the Holy Army. From that time forth the Brothers-minor never ceased to consider themselves as a knighthood, destined to reinforce the exhausted troops of the Temple and of the Hospital on the battlefield of Faith. The zeal of the Crusaders incited them to go forth in hundreds, some to fight in the Holy Land, others to seek martyrdom amongst the Moors of Africa. And when the Saracen bands, in the pay of the Emperor Frederick II, besieged Assisi, it was St. Clare, the fearless daughter of St. Francis, who appeared before them, holding the Holy Eucharist in her hands, and thus put the infidels to flight. The Order is poor, but it has received the heritage of the triple love which its founder bore towards God, humanity, and nature. However humble their cells may

be, they are yet illumined by heavenly visions. The Brothers go in search of lepers, whom they carry on their shoulders, and of robbers, whom they convert. They are the intimate friends of the humblest creatures, they honour them as they would their sisters, and they receive in return service and respect from them. A legend tells of a worthy religious of Soffiano who was so beloved of the little birds that, as he prayed, they would come and settle on his head and shoulders. It is said that Brother Egidio, when discussing the virginity of Mary, took the earth as witness, and, striking it three times with his stick, brought forth from it three lilies; that when St. Antony of Padua saw that the heretics of Rimini refused to listen to him, he went to the edge of the sea and preached to the fish. In those heroic times of the Franciscan order, poetry indeed reigned everywhere. But she had yet to take bodily form and to produce poets. Three such stand out prominently in the first half of the thirteenth century.

The first of these abandoned profane literature. We do not know what name he bore in his own age, we only know that he was called the King of Verse because he was held

to be the prince of contemporary poets, and because he excelled in those voluptuous songs of which Italy has always been too fond. The emperor even revived on his behalf an ancient Roman custom, and awarded him the poetic crown which was later to adorn the brow of Petrarch and of Tasso. This man had already attained to the height of human glory, when one day he entered a church in the market town of San Severino where Francis was preaching. From the midst of a dense crowd he watched closely the humble mendicant whose follies he had ridiculed, and whose eloquence captivated him. It seemed to him that Francis was pierced by two swords in the form of a cross: the first extended from his head to his feet, the second reached from one hand to the other. At the same time, according to the legend, he felt himself pierced by the sword of the divine Word, and, renouncing all the pomps of the age, he threw himself at the feet of the blessed Father, who gave him the habit and bestowed on him the name of Brother Pacificus, because he saw that he had turned from the cares of the world to the peace of Christ. But while enjoining Brother Pacificus to give up worldly vanities,

St. Francis did not force him to forget his early profession. How could he, who always had songs on his lips, and to whom the songs of angels were constantly audible, dream of banishing poets from his republic? When he improvised his canticles he bade the new convert reduce them to a more exact rhythm, thus setting a good example of respect for those rules of the poetic art which true poets never neglect. In return, the former troubadour learnt from him to look for the true sources of poesy, not in the commonplaces of the dissolute Provençal or in classical mythology, but rather in the depths of the human heart, in that unfathomable abyss of the conscience which had been touched by faith and repentance. Brother Pacificus became later on the Provincial Minister in France, but in the midst of the most arduous duties the poet in him is still recognisable, if only in the dazzling visions which attended him. One day he saw the heavens opened and in the midst a vacant throne, and a voice told him that the throne had once belonged to a fallen angel, but that God was reserving it for the poor man of Assisi. If indeed no poem has come down to us in his name, we will not

blame the austerities of the cloister. Doubtless the former king of verse wished to expiate his renown, and concealed his genius in some of those anonymous canticles which were so popular in the Middle Ages, just as he had concealed his laurel crown beneath the hood of the Order of St. Francis.

After the death of Pacificus a still greater poet appeared among the Brothers in the person of St. Bonaventura. The theological knowledge of this doctor has never been disputed, and he was esteemed by Gerson as the most renowned master who had ever appeared in the Paris University. But we do not sufficiently appreciate the fine genius which buried itself so bravely in the dust of scholastic controversies, though it lost none of its dignity and splendour by so doing. If the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, modelled on Aristotle's principles of logic and reduced to an exact dogma, was designed for the Order of St. Dominic, and was addressed particularly to the lettered classes, the philosophy of St. Bonaventura, permeated by the traditions of Plato and charged with mysticism, was equally fitting for the Order of St. Francis, and was

intended to appeal, not only to the small number of scholars, but also to the populace, and that less by the exercise of reason than by that of charity.

Like St. Augustine, like Boethius, like the doctors of the school of St. Victor, St. Bonaventura had realised the power of the Christian dogma of the Word to throw light on, to amend and complete the platonic doctrine of ideas. Deriving his material in part from the Gospel of St. John, in part from Timæus, he compiled from them a wonderful system of metaphysics. This it is which gives the key, not only to all that he wrote, but to all that was greatest in the early Franciscan literature; hence it is necessary to give a brief outline of the central doctrines.

"All knowledge," said the holy doctor, "is contained in two books. The one, inspired from within, embodies all the divine ideas—the prototypes of all the substances to which they have given birth; the other book, inspired from without, is the world in which the thoughts of God are imprinted in imperfect and perishable characters. The angel reads from the first, the beast from the

second. Creation was imperfect while it lacked a being who could read in both books at once, and who could interpret the one by the other. That is the destiny of man; and philosophy has no other use than that of leading man to God by all branches of creation. She achieves her purpose in three ways. Thus man grasps the exterior world by perception; he holds it by desire; he comprehends it by judgment. And at first we perceive, not the substance of concrete things, but the phenomena—that is to say, the images which strike our senses. Further, these images recall the divine Word, the image of the Father, and by Him alone the Father is known. Secondly, we find pleasure in beauty alone, and beauty is only proportion in number. But as all creatures are beautiful in some manner, therefore number is revealed in all, and number, being the principal sign of intelligence, the stamp of a sovereign workman may be seen in all. Lastly, reason can only be developed by consideration of the abstract, by ignoring transitory phenomena, and by waiving the conditions of time, space, and change, in order to grasp qualities permanent, immutable, and

absolute. Moreover, if God Himself is absolute and unchangeable, it follows that He alone can rule our knowledge, and that there is a divine art which produces all the beauties of creation, and by the light of which we appreciate them. Such a doctrine, instead of reducing all to the dictates of reason, gives the essence of the two faculties which produce poets and which philosophers have too often despised, viz. imagination and love. On the one hand, by regarding all creatures as concrete symbols of divine thought, we are able to justify the imagination of man, which acts like God, which also translates thought by symbols, which moves heaven, braves all criticism, all comparison, in order to represent more exactly the idea which it has conceived, and which it despairs of reproducing in all its purity and splendour. From this source sprang the symbolism which the Middle Ages found exemplified in the Holy Scriptures, and which had permeated the books of scholars, the songs of the Church, and was apparent in all the details of architecture and sacred art. In that symbolism every ornament was an emblem, every historical personage had also an allegorical inter-

pretation: the palmer, for example, typified life eternal, and the sacrifice of Isaac that of Jesus Christ. No one spoke the language of symbolism more boldly than St. Bonaventura in his all too little known pamphlets. The very titles of these would be appropriate for hymns and dithyrambs: "the Six Wings of the Seraphim, the Seven Roads of Eternity, the Journey of the Soul to God." On the other hand, more than intelligence is required to recognise behind the veil of nature the eternal beauty which hides herself; in order to elude that which despoils her, in order to pursue her—we must also have love. Love is the foundation of that wisdom which trusts less to syllogism than to prayer. It is also the culmination of it, for do not imagine that the holy doctor would have been satisfied with the barren knowledge of the Creator and His attributes. Having arrived at the point where reason fails, he burnt with a desire to penetrate further; he wished, he says, to lay aside for the time the powers of reason, and to direct all his understanding and being towards God until his will should be merged in God's. But when asked by what means that would be possible, he urged

the necessity of consulting grace and not knowledge, desire and not thought, prayer and lamentations and not the study of books, the spouse and not the master, God and not man. "Let us die then to ourselves," he continues; "let us enter into the mysteries of the darkness; let us impose silence on solicitude, on desire, on the phantoms of the senses, and, in the train of the Christ crucified, let us pass from this world to our Father."

A spirit which breathed so much passion even into philosophy could not brook any restraint. It must needs break loose from rigid scholasticism, from those formalities of education and discussion which were too stereotyped for his generous heart, too circumscribed for his large outlook. After having studied and commented upon the Sentences of Peter Lombard in the University of Paris, for seven years he sought distraction in writing a book, which was a poem in all but metre, viz. the "Legend of Saint Francis." And this poem surely merits detailed consideration, for nothing can better serve to establish incontestably the poetic tradition of the Franciscans than the legend of their patriarch written by so venerable a hand.

The preface prepares us for an account founded solely upon authentic evidence, and on fact canonically confirmed. St. Bonaventura compiled it in response to the prayers of the chapter-general of the order, and out of gratitude to the saint to whose intercession he had owed health and life, from his childhood. He visited the places beloved of the servant of God, and sought out the friends and disciples who survived him; he sacrificed all, even ornamentation of style, to love of truth. But if he loved truth too much to modify it by fiction, it inspired him so deeply that his language became animated and heightened, and borrowed from the outset all the verve of poesy. Even on the first page St. Francis figures as the Star of Morning, as the Rainbow of Peace, as another Elias. But still further, St. John in the Apocalypse beheld an angel ascending from out the rising sun, holding in his hand the seal of God; St. Bonaventura identifies that vision with the penitent of Assisi: "that messenger of Christ, living the life of the angels, who had come to call man to tears, sackcloth, and ashes, and to mark with the sign of repentance those who bewail their sins." He relates the begin-

ning of the narrative with the restraint which is the hall-mark of good historians, but, as he proceeds with the story of the saint's doings, his emotion overpowers him and wrests from him ejaculations of admiration and joy. He betrays himself above all by the charming simplicity with which he records his master's love for all the works of God, and "how all created things were to him a source of consolation." Instead of concealing the child-like innocence of the friendship which the blessed one had for the birds of heaven and the beasts of earth, he sympathises with it and ennobles it by his own lofty appreciation. "For," says he, "in the eyes of God's servant, all created beings were like so many streams flowing from that source of boundless love from which he would fain drink, and their diverse virtues seemed to him to form a celestial harmony to which his soul was attuned." Lastly, when he approaches the end of that life illumined by divine apparitions, ecstasies and wonders, when the miracle of the stigmata had almost exhausted the last resources of his Christian eloquence, he describes the saint's death; and with the perfect tact of the true poet he concludes with an anecdote,

the simplest yet the most touching of all. He tells us that "even when the holy man was drawing his last breath, just at the moment of twilight, the larks, those birds who love the light and hate darkness, came in flocks and settled on the roof of the house, and for a long time continued to circle joyously about him, as if to give a testimony, both touching and impressive, to the saint who had so often joined with them in singing the divine praises." It is the union of simplicity with grandeur which has given a merited popularity to the legend written by St. Bonaventura, and that is the source from which Giotto and his successors have derived inspiration for their representations of the figure of St. Francis, which have been so constantly reproduced and which people have never ceased to love.

But when poetry has ensnared a congenial spirit it does not loose its hold until it has called forth songs. The doctor, historian and minister-general of the Order of St. Francis, had perforce to succumb to the frailty of all impassioned hearts, and he too composed verses. Like his master he chose a mistress for his thoughts; he also chose Poverty, whom he

personified as the sovereign of all poor virgins —the Virgin Mother of the God who was born in a stable. The Virgin Mary, whose cult had so softening an influence on the barbarous customs of the Middle Ages, who attracted to her service so many knights and poets, was indeed the only love worthy of that chaste soul, of whom his contemporaries said that "Adam had not sinned in him." And since earthly women loved to be serenaded at night by the songs of the troubadours, he deemed it fitting that, in all the churches of his Order, the bells should sound at sunset as a perpetual memorial of the angel's greeting to the Queen of Heaven. The *Angelus*, that poetic appeal instituted by the humble Franciscans, resounded from belfry to belfry to gladden the heart of the peasant at the plough and the traveller by the wayside. The holy doctor, however, did not intend to leave to the moulded metal the duty of praising the Mother of Christ; he himself, on her behalf, had touched as it were all the chords of the Christian lyre, in his psalms imitated from David's, his popular sequences, canticles of joy and sadness. From among the compositions ascribed to him stands out prominently

a Latin poem of eighty-three octava rima. It opens with an anagram on the *Ave Maria*, each letter of which begins a strophe. But under this device, which harmonises with the tastes of the age, the poet very quickly reveals himself, and with that richness of imagery which was the peculiar possession of the mystic writers, he represents the Virgin Mary by the most brilliant symbols of the Old and New Testaments. He represents her as the Fountain of Paradise, the Rainbow after the Flood, Jacob's Ladder, Judith, Esther delivering her people, the woman who appeared to St. John, clothed with the sun, with the moon beneath her feet, and her brow adorned with twelve stars. The simplicity of its thought, the melody of the alternate rhymes, suggestive of the rocking to and fro of a cradle, mark it as a popular song, composed not only for the innumerable class of clergy, monks, and religious, but also for the Italian people, who never entirely forgot the Latin tongue but continued to use it in the hymns of the Church, and who even in our day have a confused remembrance of it, like that of a language heard in bygone times. Some scholars have disputed the authenticity of the

poem, and have not deemed it worthy of so consummate a theologian. This severe criticism, which refuses to great souls the right of putting aside their greatness, of condescending sometimes to the level of the ignorant and weak, is less worthy of acceptance than that of the great Corneille, who judged these stanzas to be so truly poetic that he wished to translate them, thus to satisfy, as he said, "the obligation which we all have to use for the glory of God at least some part of the talents which we have received." Here are the first lines of the translation, in which the frankness of the original is somewhat concealed beneath the customary pomposity of the seventeenth century:

"Accepte notre hommage et souffre nos louanges;
Lis tout céleste en pureté,
Rose d'immortelle beauté,
Vierge, mère de l'humble et maîtresse des anges;
Tabernacle vivant du Dieu de l'univers,
Contre le dur assaut de tant de maux divers,
Donne-nous de la force, et prête-nous ton aide;
Et jusqu'en ce vallon de pleurs
Fais-en du haut du ciel descendre le remède,
Toi qui sais excuser les fautes des pécheurs."

The break between the Middle Ages and

the Renaissance has been much exaggerated. The first half of the age of Louis XIV was thoroughly healthy and vigorous, and yet its foundations were laid in the past—a fact too often ignored. While Madame de Sevigné and all the court still took great pleasure in those chivalrous romances, full of memories of the Holy Grail and of the Round Table, while Molière and La Fontaine were inspired by the old fabliaux, Bossuet assimilated the ideas of the scholastic doctors, and Corneille, thinking of his own salvation, resorted to the *Imitation of Jesus Christ* and the Canticle of St. Bonaventura. It was not until a more fastidious generation had succeeded to these great men that the fashion arose of scorning "the confused art of our old romance-writers" and of deploring the darkness in which St. Thomas Aquinas and Roger Bacon lived.

Although the peoples of Italy in the time of St. Bonaventura were still sufficiently conversant with the Latin tongue for it to be spoken in the pulpit and in the councils of the republics, yet the moment had come when the vulgar tongue, matured in progress of centuries, was to dominate business and thought. And this final triumph of the

mother-tongue was hastened most of all by the preachings of the Franciscans, and their proclamations of the Word in the public squares and in the country districts to the poor and illiterate, not according to the rules of theologians, but in the manner of popular orators. In this connection it is recorded that one day St. Francis visited the town of Montefeltro, where a great crowd had assembled, eager to hear him, and mounting a hillock which overlooked the square he began to preach, taking for his text these two lines:

"Tanto e il bene ch'io aspetto,
Ch'ogni pena m'è diletto."

It is reported also of St. Antony of Padua that, though he was born a Portuguese, yet he preached to the Italians in their own tongue so effectually that he attracted audiences of thirty thousand men.

Such were the beginnings of that prose which was destined to be so vigorously and seriously handled by Dante and Machiavelli. Poetry was not to be behindhand: St. Francis had rendered it the same service by composing his canticles in the language of his

country. His example was followed, and soon the most formal doctrines of orthodoxy, the boldest sentiments of mysticism, began to assume the form of popular songs intended to appeal to the multitude. But the pioneers of this experiment were more anxious for the edification of others than for their own glory.

The Franciscan annals have not preserved the memory of Fra Jacomino of Verona, and even the name of this religious would be lost if it did not appear at the end of a poem now in the library of St. Mark's at Venice. If Jacomino was writing before the end of the thirteenth century, as one might conclude from the handwriting on the manuscript, it is not astonishing, since he lived near the cradle of the Order, that he should have borrowed from it something of its first fervour and simplicity for his poem, which he intended to be the record of two histories, those of Hell and Paradise. These two subjects had never ceased to stir Christian imagination. It was not enough to preach to the people about eternal joys and sorrows, he wished them to be painted and engraved on the walls of the churches. He wished

long descriptions to be made of that other life, where alone he had hoped to find peace and justice. The invisible world then constituted the basis and the background of all the literature of the Middle Ages, but that world was represented in two different ways. Sometimes spirits figure in these visions of a future life, in the journeys to heaven or hell so often described in legends of the saints, in chronicles and in popular traditions which lend themselves so readily to interpolations, to allusions, to satire, and to all poetic licences. Sometimes the piety of more scholarly men favours rather the close adherence to Holy Scripture, or to the Fathers and Doctors, and it is from their words, as from so many strokes of the brush, that a picture, less varied but more definite, of the two eternities is composed. Fra Jacomino belongs to the second class, and by his very association with it he reveals himself as a true son of the Church, a theologian taught by works both divine and human, who prides himself that he has elaborated nothing, but has borrowed everything from sacred writings, from sermons, and from the writings of the saints. Such complications were very common

in the Middle Ages, but daring and novel was the attempt to reclothe them in poetic form and in the vernacular tongue, to dedicate them to the crowd who gathered round the singers on the squares and market-places. Indeed, the two works in question, which were written in the dialect of Verona, one composed of three hundred and forty lines, the other of two hundred and eighty, are modelled exactly on the form of the Chansons de Geste which spread throughout Europe during the thirteenth century. The lines of thirteen syllables, grouped in quatrains and terminating in the same rhyme, recall the alexandrines and the single-rhymed passages of the old Carlovingian poems. The beginning and end obviously imitate those passages in which the romance-writers strive to arouse the curiosity of their readers by the promise of impressive stories and by the scorn which they express for their predecessors and their rivals. Fra Jacomino is careful to assure his readers that his poem is not legendary and that it does not tell of buffoons, because he wishes to destroy the prevalent interest in the fabulous stories of Roland and Oliver, which the jongleurs of his day recited in the theatres

of Milan and Verona. This aim must not be forgotten in the perusal of the two little works whose trivialities are not glossed over in order to reveal an exact picture of the customs of a people who will not consent to be instructed and won over except at the price of such trivialities. Here is the beginning of the "Inferno": "To the honour of Christ, the Lord and King of Glory, and for the good of man I wish to tell you a story: he who bears it in mind will obtain victory over his crafty enemies. I wish to tell you of the infernal city; how evil and perverse she is. She is called Babylon the Great: I will repeat what the saints tell of her. And when you have heard the true facts, about the construction of each part of that city, you may perhaps by a true repentance obtain some pardon for your sins."

The city of evil is built in the lowest depths of a burning abyss, which is so deep and wide that if all the waters of the ocean were cast into it, they would be swallowed up like so much molten wax. In the midst flow troubled and poisonous waters, between banks covered with thorns, nettles, and brushwood sharper than the sword. Above is an en-

circling and murky sky, of iron and bronze, resting upon mountains and rocks which admit of no outlet. Typhon, Satan, and Mahomet guard the door: unhappy he who passes into their hands! A high tower surmounts the entrance: there stands a sentinel whom none can deceive, and who never sleeps. Night and day she cries, "Keep the door closed, and guard well the paths and highways that none escape! But if any approach, let the door be opened and the drawbridge lowered."

The king of this city of woe is called Lucifer, and the demons who attend him are described with all the characteristics with which popular imagination had endowed them. Jacomino, like Dante, Orcagna, and Michael Angelo, represents them with horns, hairy hands, blacker than coal, howling like wolves, baying like dogs, some armed with spears, some with forks, some with clubs and blazing firebrands. They breathe forth flames; one stirs the brazier, another strikes the iron or casts the bronze. So vivid is this description that it is not surprising that the good religious is himself terrified by it, and cries out: "So horrible to look on is this cruel company that

one would choose rather to be chased over mountain and valley, from Rome to Spain, with cruel blows from spiked iron, than to meet one such in the fields."

The dwellers in the Inferno have no greater joy than that of welcoming a reprobate. They hasten towards him and greet him with songs of triumph. But scarcely has he entered in before his feet and wrists are bound, and he is presented to the King of Death. The latter delivers him to one of his evil servants, and commands him to be thrown into a pit which is deeper than the space between the sky and the abyss. So strong is the stench which issues from it that it can be smelt over a thousand leagues away. Serpents, vipers, basilisks, and dragons swarm there. Presently the sinner is enticed away from that spot and plunged into waters of such intense cold that the endurance of one day in them seems more like that of a year. After that he is cast into a furnace of so great heat that he yearns for the ice again. This dark and fetid fire throws forth no light. To an earthly being it appears like a fire painted in a fresco or in a book. "Then comes the cook Beelzebub, one of the most evil of the hell-dwellers, who

spikes the guilty one on a great iron boar-spear, and roasts him like a pig. He bastes him with gall and vinegar, and serves him up as a royal dish to the king of the nether world. And the king tastes him, and wrathfully exclaims to the bearer, "Away! tell that wretch of a cook that the dish is ill done, and he must put it back on the fire, and leave it there."

Such a passage was sure to appeal to the people, to wrest from them the smile which ensures their conquest, for in such a mood the audience is ready and willing to listen to the serious lessons intended for their instruction. Indeed, the poet declared that a deep meaning is concealed behind this figurative language. The punishments which he describes are only the realistic picture of those eternal torments which he despairs of adequately describing, "even if he had five hundred mouths, nay a thousand, which should be silent neither by night nor day." Having reduced his audience to such a state of terror, he seizes the opportunity of depicting the moral torments of the damned and of pointing lessons from them. "It would be better for the wicked to die a thousand times over than to live for a single hour, for he has neither

relative nor near friend who can help him. The son meets the father, and often they quarrel. "Father," says the son, "may the Lord, the King of Heaven, curse thee, body and soul! For while I was in the world you never chastised me, but encouraged me in evil. And I still remember how you pursued me stick in hand, if I failed to deceive neighbour and friend." The father answers him: "Cursed son, it is because I strove too much on your behalf that I find myself in this place. For you I deserted God, and enriched myself by plunder, usury, and extortion. Night and day I toiled to acquire castles, towers, and palaces, hills and plains, woods and vineyards, in order that you might be in comfort. Oh my beloved son, may the heavens curse you! for I did not think of God's poor who were dying of hunger and thirst in the streets!" At the same time the two reprobates fling themselves on each other as if they would kill each other, and "if their teeth would reach so far, they would tear out the heart from the breast." Nothing can exceed the horror of the final detail. The poet gains forgiveness by that bold onslaught against the evil-doers of his age, by his tender thought for the

poor. He has only to conclude, and he takes farewell of his hearers thus: "Know that this is neither fable nor a fool's tale. Fra Jacomino of Verona, of the Order of the Brothers-minor, has compiled it from manuscripts, glosses, and sermons. Now let us all pray Christ and His Mother to grant reward to the author of the story and to you who have listened to it with great reverence."

A composition so curious can only be judged in relation to the memories, customs, and upheavals which inspired it. The pious writer owes less than he says to the sacred writings. The holy books, such as the Fathers of the early centuries, always proclaim eternal torments, but they rarely describe them. Some verses of the Apocalypse reveal, only as it were in the dim distance, the bottomless pit and the fiery lake, but it seems as if the well-beloved hastens to turn aside from these menacing apparitions. Later, when the fall of the Roman Empire and the ruin of the whole visible world had impelled more forcibly than ever the thought of men towards invisible things, St. Augustine and St. Gregory the Great strove to throw light on the darkness and to unravel the mystery of divine

justice. In proportion as barbarism gained strength, as the minds of men became coarsened and their hearts hardened, it was essential that the Church should rule them by terror, and speak to them in the tongue which they themselves had evolved. If she controlled them by the stake and instruments of torture, it was because she considered the matter from all points of view. When the Norman pirates, the Hungarians, and the Saracens laid waste half Europe, it is no wonder that such incendiarism should be reflected in the pictures of the Inferno drawn by contemporary preachers. They must not be accused of magnifying the supposed horrors. They found their hearers in a state of terror, and took advantage of their fears only to control and soothe their consciences. Such were the models to whom Fra Jacomino looked for inspiration, and it was perhaps from a theological compilation ascribed to St. Bonaventura, under the title of *Fasciculariius*, that the Franciscan of Verona drew the first outline of his infernal city with its fire and ice, the fury of demons, and the sinners who rend each other.

But tragedy does not reign supreme in

the poetic inferno of the Middle Ages. Comedy always forces its way in; and that for two reasons, the one literary and the other religious. On the one hand, all minds retain that variableness of childhood which passes in one moment from tears to laughter, that *naïveté* which will brook no control and cannot conform to an acknowledged system. To satisfy this instinct there is no romance of chivalry without a comic episode, parallel to the burlesque figure which Calderon introduces into his *Auto Sacramental.* For the same reason there is no cathedral, however majestic, which does not conceal beneath its roof, on its pinnacles, in the woodwork of its stalls, grinning and laughable figures. On the other hand, all the masters of the spiritual life advise us to fight against temptation by scorning it, and this scorn is expressed symbolically in the grotesque forms which typify the tempter and his tools. The old painting which adorns the apse of St. Mary of Toscanella shows Satan seated in the midst of flames, grinding with his pitiless teeth guilty souls whom he casts into the jaws of a monster crouching at his feet. It is the faithful memorial of a description interpolated in two

famous legends, that of Tundale and that of young Alberico. Dante himself, the austere exile, the pupil of Aristotle, of Virgil and St. Thomas, does not hesitate to break the monotony of his hell by bizarre scenes of the damned struggling in the fetid waves, and by the ludicrous trumpet at whose sound the demons assemble.

These examples explain the work of Fra Jacomino, and justify his claim to rank among those bold poets who pointed out the roads of eternity to the author of the *Divine Comedy*. But the Franciscan, less confident of his own powers and more eager to achieve his goal, does not enter Paradise by way of the Mount of Purgatory as does Dante. Rather does he agree with the conception of St. Augustine, from whom he seems to have borrowed the idea of two rival cities founded on two different types of love: the one on that excessive love of God which induces hatred of self, the other on that excessive self-love which induces hatred of God. To the Babylon of the Inferno he opposes the heavenly Jerusalem. In describing that, nothing disturbs the serenity of his imagination nor the sweetness of his language. It only remains to

translate his work in form somewhat abridged, but not so far as to alter the meaning.

"Let us imagine a holy city. I will tell those who wish to hear how the interior is planned, and, if anyone bears in mind what I am going to say, a great benefit will undoubtedly accrue to him. That majestic and beautiful city of the most high God, where Christ is ruler, is named the heavenly Jerusalem. Very different is it from that city of woe, Babylon the Great, where dwells Lucifer with his train. . . .

"Some of my words are wholly true, the others, I warn you, are imaginary. If anyone denounces them and takes them in bad part, it is evident that there can be no love of God within his heart.

"To begin with, the city is encompassed by walls, built in the form of a square. The walls are of equal proportions in height, length, and breadth. On each side there are three splendid gates, lofty and spacious, and more brilliant than stars. Their arches are adorned with gold and pearls, surmounted by crystal battlements, and on the heights stands a cherubim as sentinel, his brow encircled with

a crown of hyacinth, his hand armed with a fiery sword, which wards off the attack of dragon, serpent, and all harmful things. No sinner can enter, however mighty he be. In the midst flows a beauteous stream bordered by trees and sweet-smelling flowers; its limpid waters shine more brightly than the sun and carry along with them pearls and glittering jewels, each one of which has the power to rejuvenate the aged and to bring back the dead to life. The trees planted on the banks yield fruits sweeter than honey, such that the very taste of them heals the sick. These trees never lose their leaves, and the scent they exhale sweetens the air for a thousand leagues or more. Goldfinches, nightingales, and other beautiful birds sing there, by night and day, melodies more harmonious than those of viols, flutes, and pipes.

"There, in the ever-verdant gardens, sport the happy wights, who have no other care than to bless their Creator. There are the patriarchs and holy prophets, clothed in rich raiment, and glorifying God in song and psalmody—blessed apostles, glorious martyrs, a great company of confessors and holy virgins—a glorious host bearing the banner of

honour and beauty, and chanting a song whose charm is so powerful that whoever hears it need no longer fear death. That blessed host emits such joyous sounds, that heaven and the whole aerial region seem full of instruments and voices. And I say again unhesitatingly, that in comparison with these voices the earthly sound of the lute, organ, and symphony, siren or water-sprite, would seem nought but the lowing of cattle! For it is the heavenly King, seated upon His throne, who has taught them how to produce these harmonious melodies.

"But the sovereign joy which surpasses all other pleasures is the contemplation of the face of this sweet Lord. Happy the man to whom God allows the heavenly vision! It is this sight which renews the youth of the blessed musicians, and makes their hearts leap for joy, their eyes gleam, their feet skip, and causes them to stretch forth their hands as if they would lead a dance. And the more they contemplate, the more do they rejoice. They are filled with a love so tender, that each joyfully regards the other as his master. Their eye and intelligence become so subtle that they discover all things in heaven an

earth. These saints live in the certainty that they will never die, but that they will dwell eternally in life, joy, and peace. This is the truth, and Scripture declares it—that there is no other glory or paradise than the vision of the beauteous countenance of the omnipotent God, before whom stand the cherubim, in a great procession both morning and evening, pleading for us wretched sinners.

"But, after what I have said, my heart will not allow me to pass over in silence the royal throne of the Virgin Mary, on the right hand of God, and above all the angels, whose splendour illumines the sky. . . . So majestic and beautiful is that Virgin Queen, that all the angels and the saints laud her unceasingly. All honour her and bow before her; they speak to her more wondrous words and sing to her a more beautiful chant than heart can conceive or language express. Moreover, for the honour of her person, that noble Virgin who wears a crown in heaven, gives to her knights such chargers and palfreys as no earthly being has heard tell of, nor could their equals be found in the world. The chargers are tawny, the palfreys white. They are fleeter than stags, swifter than

the winds. The stirrups, saddles, reins, and saddle-bows are of emeralds and gold of an exquisite workmanship. And, to complete the equipage fitting for great barons, she gives them a white gonfalon, on which she is represented as the conqueror of Satan, that perfidious beast. These are the knights whom I described before. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have granted them to the Lady of Heaven to be her constant attendants, so that those may indeed esteem themselves happy who fulfil their duties, and as a reward are received into the company of the saints, are crowned with flowers, and are allowed to rest in the service of such a lady throughout eternity."

At this point the author refrains from describing at greater length a happiness which no man can comprehend. "Now," he concludes, "let us all pray the Virgin Mary that for our sake she stand incessantly before Jesus Christ, and that she prepare for us at our last end a refuge in heaven."

Without doubt the Paradise of Fra Jacomino reflects a very earthly comfort and very monastic joy. Nothing seems less

attractive to the modern imagination than the prospect of an eternal psalmody beneath vaults of gold. However, the poet reproduces several features of the vision described in the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of the Apocalypse. There is described the New Jerusalem, with her walls of jasper and her palaces of gold and crystal. But, when the apostle St. John, the most sublime of all the evangelists, used these images, he assuredly did not intend to proclaim such a miserable form of happiness to Christians, to men taught to despise riches, to mortify their senses, and to expect martyrdom. Rather, in accordance with eastern notions and the tradition of the prophets, he spoke a symbolic language which he had learnt from his readings. He himself, from the beginning of his book, illustrates the ideas he propounds, and these will last for ever. Throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages people attributed to metals and stones mysterious properties, and moral affinities, which caused them to be regarded as the emblems of different virtues. That is why the Church, so discreet in the choice of pictures she presented to Christians, who only tardily allowed

representations of hell to appear on her walls, did not hesitate, from the earliest times, to reproduce the vision of the saint of Patmos. This is the source of those wonderful mosaics which adorn the apse of so many Italian basilicas from the fifth to the thirteenth century, in which the heavenly Jerusalem is represented in all her splendour, with her glittering gates and the angels who guard them, with the tree of life represented by the palm, and with the river which usually forms the frame of the picture. Often also the patriarchs and the apostles figure in these pictures as four-and-twenty elders robed in white, who stretch forth their arms and offer their crowns to Christ, while a long procession of virgins and martyrs, richly clad, approach, bearing palms in their hands. Such pictures could Fra Jacomino have seen, if he had visited Rome, in St. John Lateran, in St. Praxides, St. Apollinarius the New of Ravenna, and, indeed, without leaving his own province, at St. Mark's in Venice, and in many other churches since destroyed, on the plain of Italy, where so many were built but many more ruined. What he saw there he explained to himself by the help of the

interpretations taught in all the schools, and preached from all the pulpits.

But the warlike imagination of the Middle Ages had other needs than the calm and traditional faith of the early Christians. It was essential that the pictures of immortality should be in keeping with the new tendencies and customs. The book of *Diæta Salutis*, ascribed to St. Bonaventura, describes the company of the saints as one of those crowded courts the pageantry of which delighted the people of that age:

"Christ reigns there as sovereign. The Holy Virgin Mary appears there as queen with her followers. The patriarchs and prophets are the counsellors of the prince. The apostles figure as seneschals with full powers, and the martyrs as *preux chevaliers* who have vanquished the three kingdoms of the world, the flesh, and the devil." Many critics have judged these descriptions to be unworthy of the serious mind of St. Bonaventura, yet, in the memories of chivalry with which they are enriched, may be discerned the features of the Franciscan poetry, and an allusion to the prophetic vision in which St. Francis saw the walls of the celestial palace covered with

trophies and armour. Fra Jacomino goes further; he does not hesitate to represent his heavenly knights on white chargers, and he describes the battle steeds pawing the golden floor of the eternal Jerusalem, in much the same way as the cavalry entered the Cathedral of Siena, on the Feast of the Assumption, and proceeded to the offering between two rows of young veiled maidens. With the images of the priestly paradise, which had satisfied the piety of early Christian times, were mingled those of a knightly paradise, in harmony with the warlike customs of the thirteenth century.

But indeed that divine music with which the old poet relates facts, those songs which have no echo on earth, those flowers which crown the brow of the saints, are like the first outline of a poetic paradise, suited to the refinement of the modern imagination. Dante was to carry his work still further, and was to add to it a touch of mysticism, when he depicted the heavens in the form of a great white rose whose petals are the thrones of the blessed, and from whose calyx the angels, as so many bees, ascend towards the eternal Sun. In this way Christian art gradually develops to

suit the varied modes of thought in successive ages, the aim ever being to give human beings some conception of the future life, which they themselves are incapable of imagining, but of which they can never afford to be wholly ignorant. Though inadequate, these pictures gave some idea of a happiness entirely spiritual, and concerned with nought but the contemplation of the infinite Truth, and the perpetual progress of intelligence and love. The old poet of Verona follows the same method. His poems are entirely figurative and allegorical, but all present a picture of a paradise where we may hope to see God face to face, to be illumined by His light, to be enveloped in His love. And no feature of an age so violent and so bloodthirsty, so torn by hatred and ambition, is more impressive than the idea of a heaven where "the elect will love each other so tenderly that each will look upon the other as his master."

It may be thought that the poems of Fra Jacomino have been treated with that excessive enthusiasm which the Christopher Columbuses of libraries too often show towards their bibliographical discoveries. But we do not profess to have discovered a whole world

in these few poems, only a leaf which is worthy of being inserted in the poetic crown of the Order of St Francis. Before going further, and in order to complete the story of Franciscan genius during this second period, three buildings must be mentioned which contain lasting traces of that genius—viz. Santa Maria Gloriosa of Venice, St. Antony of Padua, and the church of Ara Cœli in Rome.

Those who visit Venice and are bewitched by the incomparable beauties of San Marco are wrong to ignore other monuments which in themselves are deservedly the pride of many towns. Such is the church of Santa Maria Gloriosa, built by the Friars-minor in 1250, while the preaching Friars were building on the other side of the Grand Canal the church of St. John and St. Paul. There, as at Bologna and at Florence, we find the two armies of St. Dominic and St. Francis encamped at the two ends of the town to guard it, rival geniuses in their buildings as they were rival zealots in their works. The Dominicans had more artists in their ranks, the Franciscans inspired a greater number outside their ranks. For the construction of their sanctuary at Venice they did not hesitate

to commission Nicola Pisano, who figures with Arnolfo di Lapo and Cimabue among the great men mentioned in the Italian Renaissance. Under his direction the façade of rough-cast was left without ornamentation, as was appropriate to a church of a mendicant order, but he designed for it a magnificent door to tempt people over the threshold. In the interior everything was superb. The three naves had the proportions of a cathedral, and the apse, with its long and brilliantly coloured glass windows, reached towards the heavens, as if to follow the Blessed Virgin Mary in her triumph. The Italian people, who were ever divinely inspired in the naming of their churches, called this one "Gloriosa," and it is in the shadow of this peaceful and chaste glory that the most renowned and far-famed of Venice repose—dukes, generals, scholars, painters and sculptors, even to Titian and Canova. These ambitious and impassioned men, lovers of wealth, but Christians above all, were agreed in thinking that it was well for their tombs to be under the protection of humility and penitence.

Padua is like Assisi, one of those places inspired by one ideal, living on a tradition

and on the memories called up by a tomb. Truly that learned city has never forgotten either her founder Antenor, or Livy to whom she gave birth, or her ancient university six hundred years old. But what seems to date from yesterday, and is the people's chief pride, is the memory of St. Antony, the well-beloved disciple of St. Francis. Antony died in 1231, in 1232 he was placed among the saints, and in 1237 the wonderful church named after him was begun. It was only intended at first to honour his tomb by raising above it that curious edifice, with its seven cupolas and its two belfries, modelled in part upon St. Mark of Venice and in part upon eastern architecture, with its elegant and dignified façade designed by Nicola Pisano, and the two rose-windows of its triforium worthy of the most beautiful cathedrals of the North. But saints are exacting masters who never release their hold over the faithful. The walls, pillars, and arches had yet to be covered with paintings. There were in particular two chapels in which the life of the Saviour, the apostleship of St. Philip and St. James, the miracles of the titular saint, formed a series of pictures expressive of an ingenuousness which excluded

neither pathos nor grandeur. The most obscure corners were filled with images, statues, and bas-reliefs, and when art had exhausted all her resources on the interior she began to adorn the adjacent cloister, the oratory of St. George, where two excellent masters of the fourteenth century painted the legends of St. George and St. Catherine, and finally decorated what is known as the "Scuola del Santo" with frescoes of Titian. Nothing could be more lastingly beautiful than those buildings, of which it is impossible to tire, and which even afford some fresh surprise to the traveller in their lateral or subterranean chapels, cloisters, and oratories. There is illustrated that characteristic of true genius—never to be satisfied, and never to believe that it has done enough to express the idea which torments and at the same time fascinates it. In a word, the inspiration flowing from the tomb of St. Antony could not confine itself to the church which it had raised, nor to her adjacent buildings; it permeated the entire town, it attracted Giotto to paint the exquisite church of Santa Maria dell' Arena, the best preserved and perhaps the most complete work of that master. It formed his school of

two hundred pupils who ornamented with their frescoes the baptistery, the Church of the Pellegrina, and even the immense roof of the Palazzo Communale.

The church of Ara Cœli is much more ancient than the Order of St. Francis. In the earliest ages a Christian basilica had been raised upon the ruins of the temple of Jupiter Capitolini, in the same neighbourhood where, according to popular tradition, the sybil had shown to Augustus the open sky, and the Virgin standing on an altar, holding her infant in her arms, while a voice from on high proclaimed: "This altar is that of the Son of God." Hence the name of "Ara Cœli," and the respect of the people for that sanctuary, already ancient when Innocent IV in 1252 entrusted it to the care of the Brothers-minor. Through their care the church assumed that severe and dignified character which has made it one of the most interesting places of that Rome which is herself so irresistibly attractive. On the outside the façade is poor and bare. In the interior twenty-eight granite columns form three naves possessing all the chief characteristics of the primitive basilicas, with the two ambos for

the reading of the Sacred Scriptures. Add to these treasures a mosaic in which Cavallini, that devout follower of Giotto, represented the prophecy of the sybil, then the chapel of St. Bernardino of Siena radiant with the frescoes of Pinturicchio, and lastly, on passing through the side door, a long vista of the Forum, the Coliseum, and the plain of the Roman Campagna. Verily it is the symbol of that life preached by St. Francis where all is poverty on the outside and dignity in the interior, with a calm outlook on eternity. Each year, on Christmas Day, a representation of the stable of Bethlehem is erected in the church. There, by the light of a thousand candles, can be seen on the straw of the manger the image of a new-born babe. A child, who is allowed on that day to speak in the holy place, preaches to the crowd, and exhorts them to love and imitate the Child-God, while the *pifferari* from the mountains of Latium play on their bagpipes joyful serenades to the madonnas of the neighbourhood. The stranger, unaccustomed to these primitive *festas*, withdraws perchance, shrugging his shoulders, but the lover of old legends on his return home opens the story of St.

Francis by St. Bonaventura, and there he finds in a short passage the origin of the manger of the "Ara Cœli," and the inspiration of more of that popular poetry which six centuries have not been able to obliterate. "Now three years before his death it befell that he was minded, at the town of Greccio, to celebrate the memory of the Birth of the Child Jesus, with all the added solemnity that he might, for the kindling of devotion. That this might not seem an innovation, he sought and obtained license from the Supreme Pontiff, and then made ready a manger, and bade hay, together with an ox and an ass, be brought unto the spot. The Brethren were called together, the folk assembled, the wood echoed with their voices, and that august night was made radiant and solemn with many bright lights and with tuneful and sonorous praises. The man of God, filled with tender love, stood before the manger, bathed in tears and overflowing with joy. Solemn Masses were celebrated over the manger, Francis, the Levite of Christ, chanting the Holy Gospel. Then he preached unto the folk standing round of the Birth of the King in poverty, calling Him, when he wished to name Him,

the Child of Bethlehem, by reason of his tender love for Him. A certain knight, valorous and true, Messer John of Greccio, who for the love of Christ had left the secular army, and was bound by closest friendship unto the man of God, declared that he beheld a little Child fair to see sleeping in that manger, Who seemed to be awakened from sleep when the blessed Father Francis embraced Him in both arms."

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

Page 116. Muratori, *Antiquitates Italicæ*, t. ii. dissert. 29; *de Spectaculis et ludis medii ævi;* Donizo, *de Vita comitisæ Mathildis.*

"Tympana cum cytharis, stivisque, lyrisque sonant hic,
Ac dedit insignis dux praemia maxima mimis."

Francesco da Buti, in his unedited Commentary on the *Divine Comedy*, renders this tribute to William II, king of Sicily: "Guglielmo fue un uomo guisto e ragionevole. . . . In essa corte si trovava di ogni perfezione gente; quivi erano li buoni dicitori in rima d'ogni conditione; e quivi erano gli excellentissimi cantatori, quivi erano persone d'ogni solazzo che si può pensare vertudioso e onesto." OZANAM.

Page 117. *The Treaty of Constance*, 1183.—The treaty ending the long war between the Empire and the Lombard states, by which the Emperor retained his territorial and administrative supremacy over the states and was granted a yearly sum of money, while the towns within their own walls had supreme power and undisputed possession of the revenues. This removed all obstacle to the development of the independent city states which was then taking place in Italy.

Page 118. *Charles of Anjou.*—The brother of St. Louis and the Church's champion; defeated Manfredi of Sicily, the son of Frederick II and representative of the imperial cause.

Page 118. *Conradin.*—The grandson of the Emperor Frederick II. He came from Germany to assert his claims, as heir of Conrad IV, to Sicily and Naples; was opposed by Charles of Anjou and defeated by the troops of Charles before he had left the plain of Lombardy. He was taken to Naples and there beheaded. From the scaffold he flung his glove to the crowd as a call to them to avenge his death, which revenge they afterwards accomplished in the Sicilian Vespers.

Page 119. *St. Thomas Aquinas.*—The "Angelic Doctor," and the most illustrious of the schoolmen. His *Summa Theologica* became the chief authority for the doctrine of the Church during the later Middle Ages, and in that as in all his teaching he aimed at showing the concord between divine revelation and human reason. With this aim in view he used syllogistic reasoning to prove most abstract truths, for he ever maintained that the perfection of man is the perfection of his intelligence.

He received his doctorate together with St. Bonaventura, and the one was the complement of the other. St. Thomas was the teacher of the schools, St. Bonaventura of practical life; St. Thomas enlightened the mind, but St. Bonaventura further recognised the truth that the heart makes the theologian, and was the first to use the expression "sweetness and light"; St. Thomas extended the kingdom of God by the love of theology, St. Bonaventura by the theology of love.

Page 119. "Having therefore found what we were searching for, we declare the illustrious cardinal, courtly, and curial vernacular language of Italy to be that which belongs to all the towns in Italy, but does not appear to belong to any one of them, and by which all the municipal

dialects of the Italian are measured, weighed, and compared."—Dante, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, I. chap. xvi.

Page 119. Muratori, dissert. 20; Rolandinus, ab ann. 1208, ad ann. 1214: "Factum es enim ludicrum quoddam castrum, in quo positae sunt dominæ cum virginibus sive domicellabus et servitricibus earumdem, quae sine alicujus viri auxilio castrum prudentissime defenderunt. Expugnatum fuit hujusmodi telis et instrumentis: pomis, dactylis et muscatis, tortellis, pyris et cotanis, rosis, liliis et violis, similiter et ampullis balsami." Ricordano Malipini, cap. ccxix.; G. Villani, Bk. VII. cap. lxxxix.: "Una compagnia e brigata di mille uomini o più, tutti vestiti di robe bianche, con un signore detto d'Amore." Francesco da Barberino, *del Reggimento e costume delle donne*, parte v., parte xix.

Statut de Bologna in 1288: "Ut cantatores Francigenarum in plateis communis ad cantandum morari non possint." OZANAM.

Page 120. St. Bonaventura, *Life of St. Francis*, chap. iv.; Wadding, *Annal*, ad ann. 1219; *Little Flowers of St. Francis*, chap. xviii.: "Of the marvellous chapter that St. Francis held at St. Mary of the Angels, whereat were more than five thousand brothers."

Page 121. *St. Clare* (1194–1253) was born at Assisi and was of noble birth. Her imagination was fired by the life of poverty and prayer led by St. Francis and his little band of brown brothers, and she determined despite all opposition to forsake all for Christ and become dead to the world. St. Francis himself received her when she fled from her home, one chill spring night, through the olive groves to the little church of the Portiuncula in the plain. From there St. Francis and his companions took

her for safety to the St. Paolo convent of Benedictine nuns, about two miles away; thence she was removed to a convent on the side of Mount Subasio owing to the repeated attacks of her relatives, and eventually, as it was necessary for those desiring to follow the Franciscan ideal to have a cloister of their own, St. Francis placed Clare and her sister Agnes, who had speedily followed her example, in the little hermitage of St. Damiano. Other noble damsels of Assisi soon joined them, and there Clare lived till her death—the foundress of the Order of Poor Clares.

Page 122. *St. Antony of Padua* (1195–1231).—He early entered monastic life; was inflamed with the desire of martyrdom, and resolved to become a Friar-minor in order that he might preach the Faith to the Saracens and suffer for Christ's sake. He started for Morocco but was forced by illness to return. For some time afterwards he lived a retired life at Montepaolo. On one occasion an ordination of Franciscan and Dominican friars was held there; no one had been appointed to preach, and so Antony was called upon and astonished all by his fervour and learning. From that moment his public career began, and St. Francis ordered him to teach theology to the brethren. He attained greatest fame as a preacher, in which capacity he zealously combated the vices of luxury, avarice, and tyranny. He wrought many miracles in the conversion of heretics—among them may be mentioned his famous sermon to the fishes, on the bank of the river Brenta near Padua. The fame of these miracles has never diminished and he is still invoked, especially for the recovery of things lost.

Tradition says that his tongue remained uninjured and of a lively red colour, and St. Bonaventura on beholding

it addressed it thus: "O Blessed Tongue, that always praised the Lord and made others bless Him, now it is evident what great merit thou hast before God."

Page 123. *Little Flowers of St. Francis,* chaps. xl. and xlvii.; *Vita B. Aegidii apud Bolland: Acta SS.,* April 23; *Vita S. Antonii, ibid.,* 13 junii; *Litanies de S. François* (Chavin de Malan, *Histoire de S. François d'Assise,* notes, p. 210); "S. Francisco, vexillifer Jesu Christi, eques Cricifixi, auriga militiae nostrae." OZANAM.

Page 123. *Brother Pacificus,* known in the world as William of Lisciano, was crowned by the Emperor as "Rex Versuum," or King of Verses. His ode in honour of the Emperor Henry VI is the earliest extant poem in the Italian vernacular. It was while he was still in the service of the Emperor as court poet that he was induced to abandon the worldly life by hearing the preaching of St. Francis at San Severino.

St. Bonaventura, *Life of St. Francis,* chap. iv. Tiraboschi has discovered the original source of this story in the *Life of St. Francis,* written for the second time by Thomas of Celano, which remained unedited among the manuscripts of the Brothers-conventual of Assisi:

"There was in the March of Ancona, a certain layman, forgetful of himself and ignorant of God, who had altogether sold himself to vanity.

"He was known as the 'King of Verses' because he was the chief of those who sang of wantonness, and a composer of worldly songs . . . ." (*Cf.* Wadding, ad. ann. 1212 and 1225.)

Page 125. *St. Bonaventura* (1221–1274), called the "Seraphic Doctor" from his fervent devotion, became

Minister-general of the Friars-minor at a critical moment, and one of peculiar difficulty owing to internal dissensions between the two factions—the "Spirituales" and the "Relaxti"—the literal observers of the original Rule and those who would introduce innovations and mitigations. Bonaventura lost no time in striking vigorously at both extremes, and so effected a partial reconciliation. At the same time he compiled his *Legend* or *Life of St. Francis* with a view to pacifying the discord in the Order and this was officially approved as the standard biography of the saint to the exclusion of all others.

There is a Spanish legend to the effect that St. Bonaventura died before he completed the *Life of St. Francis* and was allowed to return to earth for three days to finish it.

In 1264 he founded at Rome the Society of the Gonfalone in honour of the Blessed Virgin, one of the earliest confraternities instituted in the Church, and the following year he was offered the Archbishopric of York but refused the honour, in accordance with his singular humility. In 1273, much against his will, he was created Cardinal-bishop of Albano. It is said that the Pope's envoys who brought him the cardinal's hat found him washing dishes outside a convent door, and were requested by him to hang it on a tree near by till his hands were free to take it.

He was especially venerated, even during his lifetime, because of his stainless character and the miracles attributed to him. He combined in himself tender piety and profound learning, and revealed these two qualities markedly on one occasion when he was asked whence his learning proceeded. In reply he pointed to a crucifix, signifying that the great source of his own and of all

Christian knowledge is in the contemplation of the Crucified Christ.

He wrote on almost every subject treated by the schoolmen, but chiefly on philosophy and theology. His greatest work is the *Commentary on the "Sentences,"* to which all his other writings are in some way subservient. It traversed the entire field of scholastic theology. The *Breviloquium,* a shorter work, gives the best popular notion of Bonaventura's theology. These two, together with *Itinerarium Mentis* and *De reductione Artium ad Theologiam,* contain the elements of a complete system of philosophy. Some of his writings are truly mystical; in these the perfecting of the soul by the uprooting of vice and the implanting of virtue is his chief concern, and in this he developed the principles of the Victorines, as may be seen in the *De Triplici Via.* His other mystical works are *Soliloquium, Lignum Vitæ, Vitis Mystica, De Perfectione Vitæ.*

In addition to his theological and mystical works he also left a number referring to the religious life, more especially to the Franciscan Order. Among these are his explanation of the Rule of the Friars-minor and the *Legend of St. Francis* already referred to.

Page 126. *St. Augustine,* the most celebrated father of the Latin Church, was born in Numidia in 354; after an early life of scepticism and unbelief, was converted by the preaching of St. Ambrose and the prayers of his mother St. Monica. He became Bishop of Hippo, and in that capacity he wrote the *Confessions,* the *City of God,* and other theological works.

Page 126. *Boethius,* born about 475 A.D., was a Roman philosopher. He was unjustly accused of treason and

was imprisoned by Theodoric. While in prison he wrote his most famous work the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, which had a universal influence over mediæval Europe. He also translated and commented on the logic of Aristotle.

Page 126. *The School of St. Victor, or the Victorines.*—The Augustinian monastery of St. Victor near Paris was founded by Hugh of St. Victor (1096–1141), the contemporary of Bernard of Clairvaux, and this monastery became the headquarters of mysticism during the twelfth century. Hugh of St. Victor declares that "the uncorrupted truth of things cannot be discovered by reasoning," and his pupil, Richard of St. Victor, in opposition to dialectic scholasticism, declares that the objects of mystic contemplation are partly above reason, and partly, as in the intuition of the Trinity, contrary to reason. To him the mediæval world was indebted for the mystic traditions handed down from antiquity from Plotinus and Dionysius the Areopagite.

Page 126. *Timæus.*—A Greek Pythagorean philosopher who lived about 400 B.C.; was the supposed author of a philosophical work *On the Soul of the World.* Plato's dialogue, named from him, together with small and corrupt fragments from Aristotle, the so-called *Isagoge of Porphyry*, and the *Works of Boethius* formed the basis of mediæval scholastic knowledge.

St. Bonaventura takes the side of Plato against Aristotle, *In Magistrum Sentent.*, II. dist. I. pars i., quaest. i., et sermon 3; *In Hexaemer:* "Aristoteles incidit in multos errores . . . execratus est ideas Platonis, et perperam."

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

Page 126. St. Bonaventura, *Breviloquium*, lib. II. chap. xxii.

Page 130. *Peter Lombard*, born at Novara, Italy, about 1100, was an Italian theologian and the author of the *Sentences*, which became the basis of all theological teaching in the Middle Ages.

Page 132. St. Bonaventura, *Life of St. Francis*, argument to chap. v.:

"Of the austerity of his life, and of how all created things afforded him comfort."

Chap. viii.: "Of the kindly impulses of his piety, and of how the creatures lacking understanding seemed to be made subject unto him."

Chap. xiv.: "The larks—birds that love the light, and dread the shades of twilight—flocked in great numbers unto the roof of the house, albeit the shades of night were then falling, and, wheeling round it for a long while with songs even gladder than their wont, offered their witness, alike gracious and manifest, unto the glory of the Saint, who had been wont to call them unto the divine praises."

We do not quote from the *Meditations on the Life of the Saviour*, because the modern critic does not regard it as the work of St. Bonaventura. Wadding, *Scriptores Ordinis S. Francisci, cum supplemento Sbaraleæ.*

OZANAM.

Page 134. *The Angelus.*—In 1263 St. Bonaventura convoked a general chapter of the order at Pisa, and among other ordinances prescribed that at nightfall a bell should be rung in honour of the Annunciation, a pious practice from which the *Angelus* seems to have originated.

For the history of the *Angelus* prayers, see Jörgensen, *Den hellige Frans,* pp. 221–222.

Acta canonizationis S. Bonaventurae, in a foot-note, Bk. VII., Moguntiae, 1609, p. 799: "For this signally pious man instituted the cult of the glorious Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus, that the brothers might exhort the people to do her reverence at the sound of the bell which was given after Compline because it was believed that at the same hour she was saluted by the angel."

Page 136. The following is the Latin text in all its simplicity:

"Ave, coeleste lilium!
Ave, rosa speciosa!
Ave, mater humilium!
Superis imperiosa!
Deitatis triclinium!
Hac in valle lacrymarum
Da robur, fer auxilium,
O excusatrix culparum!"

The critics who eliminate this piece from collected works of St. Bonaventura do not hesitate to attribute to him another composition comprising both prose and rhymed verse, under the title of—*Corona B. Mariae Virginis.* In it occur strophes full of grace and harmony.

OZANAM.

Page 137. *Roger Bacon,* born about 1214, a celebrated English philosopher who joined the Franciscan order. His chief works are the *Opus Majus, Opus Minus,* and *Compendium Philosophiæ.* In these he paved the way to modern science, was the first discoverer of the power of

steam, and predicted the invention of the railway, the steamer, gunpowder, and the use of electricity. But these works were in advance of his age and so, like Galileo in a later age, he was imprisoned for spreading heretical ideas.

Page 138. Chavin de Malan, *Histoire de St. François;* Sigonius, *de Episc. Bonon,* p. 113: "Non tamen ipse modum praedicantis tenuit, sed quasi concionantis."

Little Flowers of St. Francis, chap. xiii.: "Of the Sacred Stigmata."—*Vita S. Antonii de Padua,* apud Bolland, 13 junii, xiv.: "Nec id admiratione vacat, cum in longinqua regione natus et educatus longo tempore fuisset, quod Italico idiomate ita polire potuit quae voluit pronuntiare, ac si extra Italiam nunquam posuisset pedem."

OZANAM.

Page 138. *Machiavelli* (1469–1527).—A celebrated Italian statesman and author. His chief works, *The Prince* and *Florentine History,* had great influence on politicians and philosophers of Europe of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Page 139. *Fra Jacomino, the Poems of,* were published first by Ozanam in his *Documents pour servir à l'hist. litt. de l'Italie,* Paris, 1850. For an interesting appreciation of the work of Fra Jacomino, see Gaspery's *History of Early Italian Literature to the Death of Dante.*

Page 140. See Ozanam's *Recherches sur les sources poétiques de la Divine Comédie.*

Page 141. For the ordinary forms of the Carlovingian epic see M. Fauriel's *Histoire de la Poésie provençale,* t. II.

chap. xxv.; on the popularity of the Chansons de Geste in Italy in the Middle Ages, Alberto Mussato, *de Gestis Italicorum post Henricum VII,* preface to Bk. III.: "Et solere etiam amplissima regum ducumque gesta, quo se vulgi intelligentiis conferant, pedum syllabarumque mensuris variis in vulgares traduci sermones, et in theatris et in pulpitis cantilenarum modulatione proferri." OZANAM.

Page 142. I must apologise for inserting here some pages which have already appeared in my *Documents inédits,* in which I have published the text of the two Italian poems (pp. 118, 291, &c.) These pages necessarily recur in the plan of my work on the *Franciscan Poets,* and I may assume that the two works will not have the same readers. It is moreover my only borrowing from the *Documents,* and further I have introduced considerable alterations in it. The following is the beginning of the "Hell":

"A l'onor de Christo, Segnor e Re de gloria,
E a terror de l'om, cuitar voio un'ystoria;
La qual spese fiae ki ben, l'avrà in memoria,
Contra falso enemigo ell'a far gran victoria."

OZANAM.

Page 142. There is no need to enumerate the countless resemblances between this infernal city and that of Dante. In particular *cf.* cantos iii., viii., xiv., xviii. of the "Inferno." OZANAM.

Page 143. *Andrea Orcagna* (*c.* 1308–1368), the greatest of the Giotteschi painters, was, like Giotto himself, an architect and sculptor as well as a painter. His finest work as a painter is to be seen in the church of Santa Maria Novella at Florence, where he painted frescoes of

the life of the Virgin and of Heaven and Hell—now greatly defaced and in part repainted. The old granary of Arnolfo del Cambio (Florence) was transformed by him into the church of Or San Michele, where he left his finest work as a sculptor in the form of a famous tabernacle built to contain a wonder-working picture of the Madonna, and decorated with dramatic bas-reliefs of the Death and Assumption of the Virgin.

Page 143. *Michael Angelo* (1475–1564), the "man of four souls," was painter, sculptor, architect, and poet, and great in each art. He served his apprenticeship under Ghirlandajo, and part of his training consisted of copying the wonderful frescoes by Masaccio in the Carmine Church at Florence. He early showed a decided preference for sculpture, and was encouraged to develop that taste by Lorenzo de Medici. His most famous works in that branch of art are the "Moses," designed for the tomb of Pope Julius II at Rome, the statue of David in the "Bella Arti" at Florence, and the statues which adorn the family church of his patrons—San Lorenzo at Florence.

One of his earliest works as a painter was the famous cartoon of the Bathers, at Pisa, which has had perhaps more influence upon the art of the Renaissance than any other single work. His most stupendous painting is the fresco of "The Last Judgment" in the Sistine Chapel at Rome, in which he expresses his bitter feelings with regard to the injustice and cruelty and avarice of men in the figures of the doomed.

Page 144. *Cf.* Dante's "Inferno," canto xxii. 13:

"With those ten demons we our course did ply;
Fierce company were they!"

Page 147.

"Ke queste non è fable, nè diti de buffon.
Jacomin da Verona, de l'Ordeno de Minori,
Lo copula de testo, de glose et de sermon."

Page 148. *The Apocalypse,* chap. xx.; St. Augustine's *City of God,* Bk. xx. chap. xxii; Bk. xxi. chap. xx.; St. Gregory's *Moralium,* Bk. xv. chap. xvii., Bk. ix. chap. xxxix.

Dialogues, Bk. xv. chap. xlv.; St. Bonaventura's *Fasciculariius,* chap. iii.: "Dicitur ignis ille ad ignem nostrum tanti esse caloris quanti noster ignis est ad depictum." Compare this passage with the following lines of Jacomino's:

"E siccom' è niente a questo teren fogo
Quel k'è depento en carta, ne'n mur, n'en altro logo,
Cosi seravo questo se l'a quel fogo aprovo
De lo qual Deo ne guardo, k'el no ne possa nostro!"

OZANAM.

Page 149. *Calderon* (1600–1681), a Spanish dramatist and poet, wrote secular and religious plays and autos—spiritual allegorical plays—for the Church. In his sacred dramas, designed for the celebration of the Festival of Corpus Christi, he appeals to his audience by introducing lighter episodes and comic figures into his interpretations of biblical stories.

Page 150. *Frate Alberico.*—A monk of Monte Cassino. In his tenth year he lay ten days and nights in a trance. While in this condition a white bird, like a dove, came and put its bill in his mouth and seemed to lift him up, and then he beheld St. Peter with two angels who carried him to the lower regions. St. Peter told him he would see the lesser torments first, and then successively the

more terrible punishments of the damned. Alberic describes graphically the scenes he witnessed: how St. Peter rescues him from the demons who would throw him into the flames, and how he is allowed finally to pass through the habitations of the blessed and through the seven heavens.

Page 150. The *Vision of Tundale* was written at Ratisbon by an Irish monk named Marcus, apparently about the year 1149, in which the vision is dated. It was written originally in Latin, but its popularity caused it to be translated into nearly every European language. The seer of the vision was a certain knight "noble of blood but bloody of deeds, fair as to body but careless about his soul." One day he fell into a fit, and was taken up for dead and remained in a trance for several days. During this trance he beheld the vision which he related to Marcus, and in the course of which his soul visited the regions "darkened with the mist of death," where it was surrounded by hordes of demons and where he espied an "uncouth, intolerable monster." For a detailed account of the vision, see *An Irish Precursor of Dante*, by C. S. Boswell, published by D. Nutt.

Page 150. *Memorie istoriche della città Tuscania*, da Fr. Ant. Turiozzi. Concerning the visions of Tundale and Alberic, see Ozanam's *Des Sources poétiques de la Divine Comédie*; Dante's "Inferno," xviii., xxi., and xxii. OZANAM.

Page 151. "De Jerusalem coelesti et pulchritudine ejus, et beatitudine et gaudio sanctorum."

"D'una città santa ki ne vol oldire
Come l'è fata dentro un poco ge vò dire:
E zò ke gen dirò, se ben vol retenire,
Gran prò ge farà, senza nexum mentire."

Page 156. *Apocalypse,* chaps. xxi. and xxii. In chap. i., verse 20, the apostle himself interprets part of his vision: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches, and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven Churches." Compare the commentary of Andrew of Cæsarea, in vol. v. of *Bibliotheca Patrum maxima.* As to that of St. Victor there is ground for suspecting that interpolations dating from the sixth century have been inserted.

Page 157. Concerning the mosaics of Rome and of Ravenna, Ciampini, *Vetera Monumenta,* vols. i. and ii.; Fabri, *Memorie sagre di Ravenna; Diaeta salutis,* in vol. vi. of that edition of St. Bonaventura's works already referred to, tit. x. chap. v: "Fides etiam debet esse coelestis, non terrea . . . et hoc signat sappirus, qui habet coelestem colorem, sicut coelum serenum. . . . Spes veniae figuratur per smaragdum, qui colorem habet viridem et gratiosum."

OZANAM.

Page 158. *Diaeta salutis,* tit. x. chap. vi.: "Ibi enim est Christus, tanquam monarcha praecipuus. Ibi enim est Regina cum puellis. . . . Ibi sunt angeli tanquam mobilissimi regis domicelli. Ibi sunt patriarchae et prophetae . . . quibus, tanquam senioribus expertis, revelat mysterium consistorii sui. Ibi sunt apostoli tanquam regis senes-calchi, habentes plenitudinem potestatis. . . . Ibi sunt martyres, sicut strenuissimi regis milites. . . ."

OZANAM.

Page 162. *Nicola Pisano* (*c.* 1240), a famous Italian sculptor and leader of a school of sculptors who took as their models the pagan forms of Roman antiquity and made them subservient to Christian ideas. Nicola's work is distinguished by masculine force and a certain

lack of tenderness, great technical skill, and a stiffness due to the fact that his source of inspiration is rather the artificial classic models than nature. These characteristics are best illustrated in his pulpit in the baptistery at Pisa and in that of the Cathedral at Siena, which was completed by his son Giovanni.

Page 162. *Titian* (*c.* 1477–1576), a famous Venetian painter, studied with Giovanni Bellini, and on the death of the latter became the portrait painter to the doges of Venice. In his later life he became the intimate friend and painter to the Emperor Charles V. Among his chief works are many representations of the Magdalen, Venus, the Madonna, the Holy Family, &c.

Page 162. *Antonio Canova* (1727–1822), a famous Italian sculptor. Among his most celebrated works are the Perseus of the Belvedere, the Cupid and Psyche of the Louvre, Hercules and Lichas, in Venice; and the great group of Theseus and the Centaur, in a specially designed temple at Vienna.

Page 166. Salembene says that St. Francis' representation of the stable at Bethlehem is the first mystery play in Italy.

Page 166. Pinturicchio (1454–1513), an Italian painter of the school of Perugino, is noted for his frescoes and panels. Many of his works are in the Vatican and the church of Santa Maria del Popolo at Rome, and at Siena.

CHAPTER IV

THE BLESSED JACOPONE DA TODI

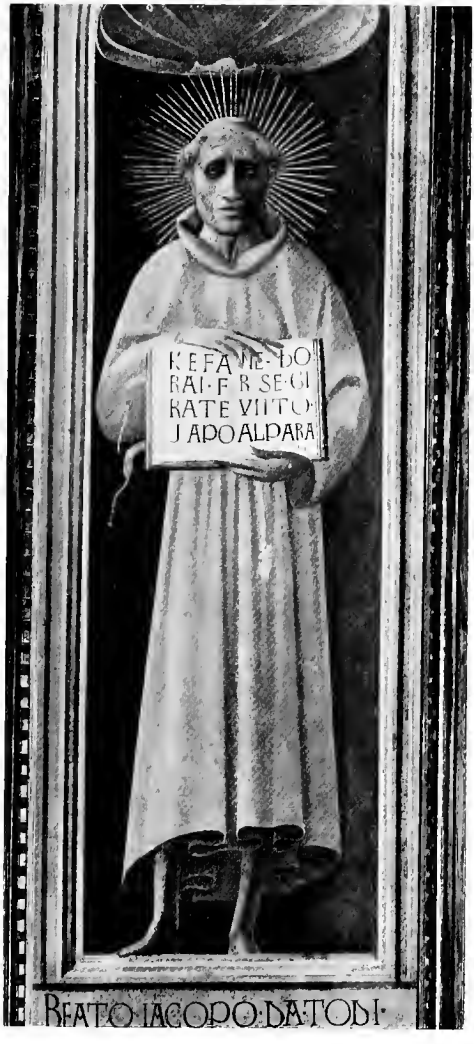
GREAT poets are not as a rule born in heroic times. They appear later when those times are far enough away to disperse the shadows attached to all human glory, yet near enough to preserve the interest in the past and to combine with that interest a feeling of regret. The *Iliad* appeared at the decline of the early Greek monarchies, and Virgil coloured the decay of Roman liberty with the inspiration of his genius. Providence illumines periods of decadence by bestowing on them the divine light of poetry, just as she adorns crumbling ruins by placing in their crevices the nests of birds.

The last years of the thirteenth century reflect all the signs of degeneration. Two great events had brought suffering and glory to the preceding decades. These were the Crusades and the struggle between the Papacy and the Empire. At the downfall of St.

Louis beneath the walls of Tunis, the last echoes of the Crusades had just died away, and disheartened Christendom was as yet only conscious of the disasters caused by the Holy Wars, and was powerless to weigh their triumphs. Moreover, that generation of famous popes, of whom Gregory VII was the first, promised to end with Innocent IV. Imperial power, which had been conquered in the person of Frederick II, devoted all its energies to suppressing his rebellious German subjects. Thus Italy had seen the culmination of the struggle between the two powers spiritual and temporal, which had rent and yet nourished her. Instead of religious disputes, disagreements on matters of state now roused hostility between one town and another, between nobles and plebeians, between the upper and the lower classes, and those formidable names, Guelf and Ghibelline, instead of representing ideals, became synonymous with strife. The deterioration of society extended even to the schoolmen. Since the death of their two leaders, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventura, a fierce struggle had centred round these illustrious dead, between those who disputed the possession of their

remains. For the forcible metaphysics which formed the basis of the *Summa* of St. Thomas were substituted the subtleties of ontology and of dialectics. People began to abandon the liberal studies for more lucrative sciences, and the 10,000 scholars who thronged to the lectures of the lawyers of Bologna were thirsting for gold rather than for justice. A few noble souls held aloof from the strife, and the sadness of human affairs directed thoughts towards God. Those who still felt some compassion for their fellow-men felt it only for the ignorant, humble, and poor, so great was their contempt for the petty conflicts of the great and learned. Such was the attitude of an Italian predecessor of Dante, who lived to be the most popular and the most inspired of the poets of the Francisan Order—the Blessed Jacopone da Todi.

It is not without hesitation that we enter upon the history of this extraordinary man, who passed from the cloister to prison and from prison to martyrdom. It deals with troublous times, religious strife, and the contest between a noble monk and a pope. But it is a story which cannot be ignored, for the consideration of the later followers of St.



JACOPONE DA TODI.

By Dominico Veneziano.

Francis introduces us to the most renowned of all—the author of the *Stabat Mater*—and a clear understanding of the events which inspired him is essential to our aim. Besides, the glory of God would never countenance a concealment of the faults of the righteous. The unbelieving can rejoice in them, the wavering can wonder at them, the steadfast in the Faith find in them a cause for praising the superiority of Christianity, for they never imagine their saints to be without passions and without weaknesses as the stoics desired their "wise men" to be; they accept them as nature made them, passionate and faulty, but able to blot out by one day of repentance many years of sin.

On the borders of Umbria, and on a hill which commands the junction of the Tiber and the Naja, rises the old town of Todi with its Cathedral, its square market-place, and its three walls—the first of Cyclopean blocks, the second of Roman construction, the third built in the Middle Ages to surround the populous quarters. Then the township of Todi mustered beneath her gonfalon an army of 30,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry. Fourteen castles enforced the obedience of the

neighbouring districts. In this powerful city, stirred by all the passions which distracted the Italian republics about the middle of the thirteenth century, the noble family of the Benedetti celebrated the baptism of a child named Jacopo. He himself took pleasure in describing in one of his poems the tender care by which he was surrounded in his youth. His watchful mother would light the lamp each night and lean over the cradle with terror born of love when the infant cried. A little further on he describes his father, serious and stern, using the rod when his rebellious child would loiter on the way to school and weep with envy when he saw little boys playing in the streets. Jacopo, however, passed rapidly through the three grades which still comprised, as in the times of the Romans, the whole curriculum of secular education—*i.e.* Grammar, Rhetoric, and Jurisprudence. The study of law led him probably to Bologna, for the customs of this famous university are clearly reflected in the descriptions which Jacopo gives of the dissipations of his youth, his love of finery, and his extravagance—the banquets and feasts which all the gold of Syria would not pay for.

Then followed the quarrels—the shame of remaining unavenged, and, after having taken vengeance, the fear of retaliation. Such were the customs of those turbulent students of Bologna! They were constantly in arms, defying the magistrates, fighting the state archers, and carrying to such excess their passion for luxury that decrees were repeatedly issued to abolish the custom of celebrating the results of the examinations by feasts and tourneys.

But when, according to the prevailing custom of those called to the Bar, Jacopo da Benedetti in a red gown had been paraded on horseback through the streets, preceded by the four trumpeters of the University, the most serious thoughts occupied his mind. His new title gave him the opportunity of speedily repairing the breach made in his father's means. At that time nothing could equal the repute in which doctors of law were held; from their midst princes chose their chancellors and the commons their magistrates. Moreover, among the Italians of the thirteenth century who were as eager for gain and as interested in litigation as the old Romans themselves, a lawyer of any

renown whatever never appeared in the public squares unless accompanied by a goodly number of clients.

Jacopo, having returned to his native town, sacrificed honour for fortune, in the pursuit of which he showed more ability than conscience; and, as the Digest and the Code possessed no difficulty which he could not unravel, by interesting himself in the affairs of his fellow-citizens he re-established his own fortunes. He thought to crown his great prosperity with the blessing of true happiness when he chose for a wife from the young girls of Todi one who combined the gifts of perfect beauty and riches with those of good birth and virtue. But it was just at this juncture that he was assailed by one of those terrible blows which force men to remember their Creator.

It happened one day in the year 1268 that the town of Todi was celebrating its public games. The lawyer's young wife was invited; she took her place on a stand crowded with ladies of rank, who enjoyed the festivities and formed at the same time one of the chief attractions of the day. Suddenly the stand gave way. At the noise of the collapse and

the cries that followed, Jacopo rushed to the spot. He recognised his wife among the victims, picked her up still breathing, and tried to free her from her garments. But she modestly thwarted her husband's efforts, until, having taken her to a retired spot, he was at last able to unrobe her. Under the rich clothing which she wore, he caught sight of a hair-shirt, and at the same moment she drew her last breath.

This sudden death, these austere habits in one brought up in all the luxury of wealth, the absolute certainty that he alone was guilty of the sins which the hair-shirt was intended to expiate, struck the lawyer of Todi as if by a thunderbolt. Rumour was spread abroad that excess of grief had unbalanced this great mind.

After several days of gloomy stupefaction, he sold all his goods and distributed the money among the poor. He was seen in the churches and streets clothed in rags, pursued by children mocking him and calling him Jacopo the madman—"Jacopone." Tradition even says that he appeared at his niece's wedding in a strange disguise, bristling with feathers—perhaps in bitter testimony to the

hollowness of the pleasures in which he was taking part. When taken to task for this frenzied behaviour, he said: "My brother thinks he will render our name glorious by his magnificence, I hope to do so by my madness." And indeed it was this same madman who was to immortalise the rich but unknown house of the Benedetti. These eccentricities, which were the outcome of his grief, also served to conceal the first throes of a magnificent repentance. The thought of death brought him no repose; he sought consolation in the sacred writings which he read from end to end. From them he learnt to make amends, by voluntary poverty, for the extravagant pleasures of his early life; and instead of applause, which he had always loved too much, he now courted humiliation and scorn and the hooting and shouting of children.

By teaching and warning men, as the prophets had done before him, by signs more powerful than words, he learnt to repair the wrong of an eloquence too often spent in upholding the cause of injustice. Just as Jeremiah appeared in the public places of Jerusalem with irons on his hands and a

yoke on his neck to signify the coming captivity, so in the midst of a festa had Jacopone shown himself, half-naked, walking on all fours, saddled and bridled like a beast of burden. The spectators withdrew thoughtfully when they saw—as they thought—the promise of a brilliant life thus shattered.

On another occasion one of his relatives, who was coming from the market with a couple of chickens under his arm, begged him to carry them for him. "You can leave them at my house," he said. Jacopone went straight to the church of St. Fortunato, where this relative had his family sepulchre, and placed the fowls on the tombstone. Some hours later the enraged relative came to complain that his fowls were not to be found. "Did you not ask me," answered Jacopone, "to take them to your house, and what can better be called your house than the place where you will live for ever?" According to the words of David, "Their tombs shall become their dwelling-place for ever."

These biblical touches did not seem out of place in the Italian towns of the Middle Ages, among a passionate and ingenuous

people whose whole life was passed in the open squares, and where, encouraged by the example of the saints, many liberties could be taken in preaching.

Often when the peculiarities of Jacopone had attracted a crowd, he would turn and preach to the people and, taking advantage of the liberty granted him to speak freely all that was in his mind, he boldly attacked the vices of his fellow-citizens.

However, as yet this popular orator had no special mission. He had merely attached himself to the third order of St. Francis, a lay institution started for the faithful who, without leaving the world, wished to submit to the laws of poverty and charity.

At this period, doubtless, when he was freed from the trammels of the world and was unfettered as yet by monastic observances, he plunged passionately into the study of theology, into obscure mysteries, into questions the daring of which he afterwards fully recognised.

At the end of ten years he realised the danger of a life which fostered his innate impetuosity without disciplining his mind.

In 1278 he knocked at the cloister door,

begging to be admitted among the Brothers Minor. These latter at first hesitated to receive the madman, and sent him away time after time until at last he proved his mental capacity by bringing to them two little essays, one in a loose form of Latin prose, the other in rather more metrical Italian.

"Why does the world strive for vain-glory, whose benefits are so fleeting?

"Its power is as fragile as an earthenware vessel which is soon broken.

"More faith may be lodged in words traced on ice than in the empty lies of the world. . . .

"Consider what has become of Solomon, once so famous, or Samson, the invincible champion.

"And the beautiful Absalom, and Jonathan the well-beloved.

"To what depths has Cæsar fallen from his mighty pedestal, and what destiny awaits the selfish rich man when his days of feasting are over? . . . .

"How transitory is worldly glory! Its glory passes like a shadow.

"O food of worms! O handful of dust! O drop of dew! O alas! Why exalt thyself thus?

"Thou dost not know if thou wilt live to-morrow: do good to all men whilst thou hast yet time!

"Call nothing thine that thou canst lose. . . .

"Think of that which is on high! Let thy heart yearn for heaven! Happy is he who can despise the world!"

The style of this short composition has nothing to distinguish it from ordinary school exercises, but the Italian canticle which accompanied it glowed with fervour. A bold though sometimes trivial originality shone from behind the rustic dialect and the popular metre. Grief and solitude, those two great inspirers of genius, had transformed the lawyer into a poet.

"Hear," said he, "of a new folly to which my caprice induces me.

"I long for death because my life has been evil. I would abandon earthly joys, and follow the straiter way. . . .

"I wish to prove myself a man, to deny

myself, and bear my cross. In a word, to commit a singular folly. I am going to cast myself headlong among rustics and fools and those who are obsessed with a holy madness.

"Christ, Thou knowest my thoughts and that I despise that world in which I once cherished a desire to master philosophy.

"My aim was then to study metaphysics in order to understand theology, and to learn how the soul can rejoice in God as it passes through the different ranks of the celestial hierarchy. I desired to understand that the Trinity is but one God, that it was essential that the Word should condescend to be born of Mary.

"Science is a holy study; it is a vessel in which gold of the highest standard can be refined.

"But a conventional theology has been the ruin of many.

"Now listen to my new intent. I have determined to pose as a fool, ignorant and clownish, and as a man full of eccentricities.

"And so away with syllogisms, the tricks of words and sophistry, unanswerable problems and aphorisms, and the subtle art of calculation.

"I leave you to laud at your pleasure Socrates or Plato, to waste your breath in eternal argument, and to sink deeper and deeper in the mire.

"I reject the wonderful art whose secret Aristotle revealed, and the platonic doctrines which more often than not are mere heresies.

"A pure and simple understanding stands aloof, and rests on its own merit, to ascend to the presence of God without the help of their philosophy.

"I discard the old books which I loved so dearly, and the rubrics of Cicero whose melody was so sweet to me.

"I deliver into your hands the instruments and songs, ladies and beautiful maidens with their wiles and their poisonous glances and all their spells.

"I surrender to you all the florins, the ducats and the carlins, and the nobles and Genoese crowns, and all such merchandise.

"I will test myself by submitting to an austere and strict religion: and thus will I prove soon whether I am pure metal or alloy.

"I will make a great fight, a long struggle and a mighty effort. O Christ, may Thy strength aid me until I triumph!

"I will cling zealously to the Cross, the love of which even now burns within me, and I will pray it humbly to kindle me with its folly.

"I will become a contemplative soul and triumph over the world; I will find peace and happiness in an exquisite agony.

"I will see if I can enter paradise by the way which I have chosen, in order that I may join in the songs and joys of the heavenly host.

"Lord, grant me to know and do Thy will here below, then care I not if damned or saved I be."

After reading these verses the Brothers Minor no longer feared to open their door to Jacopone. They realised that his folly was like that of St. Francis himself, when in the early days of his penitence he was stoned as a madman in the public squares of Assisi or could be seen in the country weeping at the thought of the death of Christ. The same passion now obsessed the penitent of Todi. It had miraculously moved that heart, hardened by the lessons of the lawyers and by the pressure of business; it lured him not only to the foot

of the altar, but to the open fields, to the woods, to all places where the Creator revealed Himself in the beauties of nature. He went about singing psalms, composing verses, and drowning his songs with his tears. He clung with the strength of despair to the tree-trunks, and when asked why he wept thus, he cried, "Oh I am weeping because Love is not loved." And if urged to explain by what signs a Christian could convince himself that he loved God, he said, "I have the sign of Charity, if I ask anything of God, and God does not grant me my request, I love Him all the more, and if God brings to pass the contrary of my desire, my love for Him is doubled."

Do not let us mistrust these ecstasies as the product of mere imagination, with no power of purifying the heart. It was through the ardour of his love for God that he was able to rekindle the love of men in an age of strife. This lawyer, who had for so long been conversant with family dissensions, and inflamed by all the factions which divided the towns of Italy—in a word, the man who lived through the Sicilian Vespers, now preached pardon for sins, and gave an equal share of his affection to his fellow-citizens and to strangers. He

said, "I know that I love my brother, and, if he offends me, I love him none the less." On another occasion he said, "I derive more pleasure from the kingdom of France than does the king himself, for I share all his joys but none of his responsibilities." And, putting charity to a still greater test, he added, "For Christ's sake I wish to endure with perfect submission all the trials of this life, all the pains, anguish, and griefs which can be described in words or conceived in the imagination. I also devoutly wish that when I die devils may carry my soul into the place of torment, that I may endure there all the tortures which are the due rewards of my sins and of those righteous persons who suffer in purgatory, and even of the damned, and of the devils, if that might be; and that until the day of the Last Judgment, and even longer, according to the good pleasure of the Divine Majesty. And above all, it would be to me a supreme joy if all those for whom I had suffered should enter into heaven before me and if, when I last followed them, they should assemble together and publicly proclaim that they owed me nought!" Doubtless these are the bold wishes of a fanatic, but it is the

fanaticism of Moses and of St. Paul when they desired to become anathema for the salvation of sinners.

The danger arising from such lofty sentiments is that they often lead to self-satisfaction, as when pride led the Stylite to his pedestal and the Cynic to his tub. For this reason Jacopone, wishing to establish firmly his love towards God and man, founded it upon self-abnegation.

When ordered to carry through a difficult mission at the court of Rome, he astonished his companions by his patience. "How can you put up with such people?" said someone to him. "And I," replied he, "am astonished that they tolerate me, and do not chase me away as they would the devil." In a word, he shared this principle with all wise men—that man must strive to know himself. But whoever knows himself realises that he is wicked, and therefore judges himself hateful, and so wishes to be hated; and in this way the seeds of pride, envy, and anger do not germinate. And yet man, while loathing the evil in himself, should never cease to love life, which comes to him from God. Jacopone wished to make himself a code of laws

fashioned so "that he did not fall into vice in order to save nature, nor destroy nature in order to eradicate vice." Thus he dissipated the reproach levelled unjustly at Christian mysticism—that it had broken the bonds of human nature almost irreparably. While subjugating his senses, his sole aim was ever to free his soul; and this aim he expressed in the following parable, in which he reveals clearly his poetic imagination:

"A young and beautiful maiden who possessed a stone of great price had five brothers who were ill-provided with worldly goods. The first played the lute, the second was a painter, the third a perfumer, the fourth a cook, and the fifth followed a dishonest trade. Now the musician, being in great straits, went to see the young girl, and said to her, 'My sister, you see how poor I am; give me your stone, and, in return, I will tune my lute, and I will play you the most beautiful melody.' But the sister replied, 'When the melody is finished who will provide me with the wherewithal to live? No, I will not sell my stone, but I will keep it until it has served me to find a husband who will main-

tain me honourably.' Next came the painter, then the others, each asking for the jewel, and in return offering his services. Their sister dismissed them all with the same words. At last a great king appeared who also desired the gift of the stone. The young maid answered: 'Know, sir, that I possess nothing in the world except this jewel; if I make you a present of it, what will you give me in exchange?' And the king promised to take her for his wife, to cherish her as his queen, and to grant her life eternal with abundance of all desirable riches. 'Sir,' said she, 'your promises are so great that I cannot refuse you this gift; I give it to you willingly.' And, as she spoke, she handed him her precious stone. The young girl typifies the soul of man, and the stone free-will—the only possession of which she can dispose regally; the five brothers represent the five senses, and the king is God Himself, to whom the soul surrenders herself, and who for this price willingly declares her His bride."

At this early date after the establishment of the Order, when each of the convents of St. Francis had its own traditions and followed

the maxims and examples of a chosen master, the doctrines of Jacopone were faithfully cherished in the memory of the religious of Todi. His companions related how he had made a practice of his theory of self-abnegation and of the suppression of the senses. He who had toiled over the treatises of Aristotle and of Cicero, and the laws of Justinian, now refused the honours of priesthood; he wished to remain a lay brother, and to perform the humblest domestic offices. He kept the derisive nickname of Jacopone which the people had given him. Accustomed to all the refinements of a life of luxury, he breakfasted on bread and water; he mixed wormwood with his food. If by chance some food less coarse than usual had appealed to his natural appetites, he punished himself by long fasting. Tradition adds another characteristic which deserves mention, because it reveals best of all the indomitable and almost savage energy of this penitent, who was resolved at all costs to subdue the lusts of the flesh. We are told that in the midst of his fasts he often called to mind the delicious feasts with which he had formerly entertained his friends. Tormented by the

temptation to break his fast, he took some raw meat, hung it in his cell, and kept it there till it became putrefied. "There," said he to his senses, "is the food you have desired, enjoy it if you will." But it happened that the odour of the decayed flesh permeated the convent and betrayed the violation of the rule. The cells were inspected, the culprit discovered and thrown into the most odious place in the house. Then, having punished himself, he composed a song of triumph with the refrain, "O joyous heart, which sings of love."

It seems that having reached this height of voluntary abnegation, the life of the penitent of Todi had but to end; but, on the contrary, at this point it had a second birth. It was by means of these secret inner struggles that this dauntless soul prepared himself for the public struggles into which the turmoil of the times was to force him, and in which he was to sin through the ardour of his zeal, and afterwards to gain absolution through the purity of his intentions.

The dissensions which Jacopone thought to escape on withdrawing from the world pursued him into the Church, and even into

the apparent peace of the cloister. At the time when he entered the house of the Brothers Minor, that great body was divided into two factions. On the one hand, some had begun to loosen their ancient bonds of poverty, to demand modification of a rule written, said they, rather for angels than for men. On the other hand, the small body of rigids claimed to be adhering to the ancient, old, austere discipline when they rejected the authority of the superiors which they judged to be corrupt. The former possessed the dignities of the Order, the solemnity of a sedentary life, and were called "Conventuals." The latter amazed the world by the sincerity of their penitence; and as they preserved better the spirit of the rule, they were called the Brothers Spiritual. It was this faction that Jacopone joined in his desire to suffer, and to atone for his sins; and events seemed at first to prove his wisdom.

It happened that in 1294, when the Holy See had been vacant for twenty-seven months, the cardinals decided to put an end to the widowhood of the Church, and to give her a saint as her master in the person of the hermit Pietro da Morrone. When the

austere old man, drawn from his cell and crowned under the name of Celestine V, had taken over the government of the Christian world, he zealously proclaimed himself in favour of the strict observance of the monastic rules; the Brothers Spiritual obtained from him the privilege of living in accordance with the early severity of the Order, in separate convents and under superiors of their own choice. This privilege must have touched Jacopone; he showed his gratitude to a man less anxious to please his friends than to save their souls. He addressed to the new pope a letter in verse which contained harsh threats harmonising ill with the ordinary language of the court: "What are you going to do, Pietro da Morrone? You are put to the test; we shall see for what work the meditations of your cell have prepared you. If you disappoint the expectations of the world, a curse will follow. As the arrow aims at the target, so will the whole world turn their gaze on you; if you do not preserve the exact balance, they will call on God to judge you. My heart was very bitter towards you when you uttered these words, 'I wish it,' which

puts such a heavy yoke upon your neck that you may with difficulty escape damnation. . . .

"Defy benefice-holders, ever greedy for revenues. Their thirst is such that no beverage can quench it.

"Beware of extortioners, they will prove to you that black is white. If you cannot defend yourself from them, you will sing a sad song."

Jacopone's warning predictions found ready acceptance from Celestine, who was already terrified by the perils of the pontificate. The old anchorite in his terror saw himself alone on the edge of this whirlpool of clashing interests, passions, and discords which threatened to sweep away Christianity, and which the strongest pope had controlled with difficulty. At the end of five months he abdicated and returned once more to his desert. The cardinals chose as his successor Benedetto Gaetani, who was so celebrated and slandered under the name of Boniface VIII. The energetic character of Boniface, his profound knowledge of canon and civil law, a long life lived in the midst of the disputes of the Church, all proclaimed him a statesman.

But there was ground for fearing that the qualities he shared with secular princes would sway the soul of the priest within him, and that this consummate disciplinarian would sometimes allow his love of justice to predominate over his sense of pity. Such may have been the fears of Jacopone, when the pope, troubled by a remarkable vision, consulted him. He had seen, he said, a bell without a clapper, the circumference of which encircled the whole earth. "Know, your Holiness," replied the monk, "that the size of the bell symbolises the pontifical power which embraces the whole earth. But beware that the clapper be not the good example which you fail to set!" Jacopone saw his sinister warnings realised when Boniface revoked the concessions of his predecessor and suppressed the privileges of the Brothers Spiritual, putting them once more under the authority of the superiors Conventual. Just at the time when this sad blow fell on the ardent reformers of the Order of St. Francis, strange rumours began to spread abroad. Boniface was accused of having compelled the abdication of Celestine V by terrifying him by nocturnal alarms; of having thrown

the holy old man into prison, there to die at the hands of the executioners. There was no truth in these tales, but discontent disseminated them and credulity believed them; and those who suspected they had been imposed upon began to question whether the murderer of a saint could be acknowledged as the vicar of Christ, whether the abdication of Celestine was lawful, the power of Boniface legitimate. These formidable questions were being raised on all hands, when, on the 10th of May 1297, two cardinals hostile to the pope, James and Peter Colonna, were joined by a little band of supporters at the castle of Lunghezza, near Rome, and dared to protest, by a solemn declaration, against the election of Boniface VIII, and, as usurper of the Holy See, summoned him to trial before the next universal council.

Unfortunately Jacopone's name appeared in the declaration as a witness for its authenticity — consequently he also incurred the excommunication with which the two cardinals and their supporters were punished. He had lived for three months in the convent which the Brothers Spiritual still owned in the town of Palestrina, fief of the Colonna, and their

chief fortress. It was from this hostile camp where all these accusations were believed, that he had decided the question which had been under dispute; and, by one of those illusions with which God allows the wisdom of men to be humbled in such a vital matter, the tried lawyer, theologian and penitent, was deceived. But his error was that of a heart zealous for the honour of the Church and harrowed by her wounds.

All the sadness of these days of calumny finds expression in the following lines which reveal less anger than love:

"The Church mourns, She weeps and laments, She feels all the horror of Her wretched state.

"O truly noble and sweet Mother, why weepest Thou? Thou seemest to suffer great tribulation. Tell me what makes Thee to utter such ceaseless lamentations.

"My son, if I weep I have good cause: I am fatherless and a widow. I have lost children, brothers, and nephews; all my friends are captive and in bonds.

"My family was wont to be at peace; now I behold them at strife; the unbelievers call

me unclean, because of the evil example which my children have set.

"I see poverty banished. . . . They esteem once again gold and silver. My enemies have feasted together; all righteous dealing has died away. Such is the cause of my tears and lamentations.

"Where are the patriarchs abounding in faith? . . .

"The prophets abounding in hope? . . .

"Where are the apostles abounding in love . . . and the martyrs abounding in courage?

"Where are the just and zealous prelates, whose very life ensured the salvation of the nations?

"Pomp, power, and luxury have corrupted my noble host.

"Where are the doctors abounding in wisdom? I see many who are learned in science, but whose lives are not in accord with my laws. They have humiliated me and left me desolate.

"O ye religious! Your moderation was formerly my delight. Now I visit all the monasteries and find little to give me consolation. . . .

"No one hastens at my call. In all the States

I see Christ dead. O my life! my hope! my joy! O my God, I see Thee stifled in all hearts."

But if misguided love inspired these lamentations, they served the policy of the Colonna in good stead. The plaints of the penitent of Todi, supported by the authority of his name, borne on the wings of rhyme and song, helped to rouse the enemies of Boniface VIII from one end of Italy to the other. It is to this period that the biographers of Jacopone ascribe a very famous satire which reveals the fanaticism of the Franciscan, supported by the views of the statesmen who urged him to write it. The Italian song paved the way for the woes lamented soon after by the lawyers of Philip le Bel:

"O Pope Boniface! Thou has staked much for a worldly life; I do not think that thou wilt be content to leave it.

"Just as the salamander lives in the fire, so findest thou thy joy and delight in scandal.

"Thou pourest scorn on all religious rule, and thou dost blaspheme and despise all law.

"No king, emperor, or any human being has ever left thee without bearing away a cruel wound.

"O shameful avarice! unquenchable thirst, which can absorb so much money and yet remains thirsty for more!"

We cannot but condemn such language, but we must remember that Jacopone, though misguided, believed that he was stigmatising a usurper and not the lawful head of the Church. In a word, we must bear in mind the peril of a century of strife, in which two bodies could meet without recognising each other, and could use for their conflict the weapons which they ought to have mustered for the service of God. Others may be scandalised by such a spectacle, but we can learn from it. We shall come to believe that in times of strife certain acts are justifiable which would not be so in times of peace, and to desist from sharing in the conflict, lest we vilify adversaries worthy of all respect. The fault of Jacopone was great; his punishment was terrible. When in September 1298, after a long siege, Boniface had reduced Palestrina, Jacopone did penance for his poem in a deep dungeon. He himself has described to us the subterranean cell in which he was caged like a lion, the chains which resounded on the stones as he dragged

them, the basket in which the gaoler left him his daily bread, the sewer over which he leaned to quench his thirst. But the old penitent laughed at his hardships. They could not, said he, do him more harm than he wished to endure. For thirty years he had prayed God to punish him; and, in the joy of having his prayers granted, he sang his songs to the clinking of his chains.

However, this man, undaunted by suffering, bowed beneath the yoke of excommunication. In the silence of his cell he had time to ponder over the cause which had placed him under the ban of Christianity. He saw himself alone, in disgrace with God and man, while the real instigators of the schism, the Colonna, in mourning garb and with cords round their necks, had gone to throw themselves at the feet of Boniface, from this time forward the undisputed head of the Church universal. He yielded at length, and pleaded for pardon in verses which still breathe the pride of a dauntless soul, and in which the prisoner defies his conqueror and his judge and challenges him to a new combat. "Absolve me," says he, "and leave me to my other trials until the

hour of my death. Beat me as much as it pleases you, I am confident of triumphing through the strength of love. For I bear, as a defence, two bucklers behind which I fear no wound: the first of true diamond, is hatred of myself; the other of flaming carbuncle, is love for others."

Boniface did not reply to this pious challenge. Months passed, and in the year 1300 the universal jubilee was celebrated to which the high Pontiff summoned the faithful of the whole world. From the depths of his prison Jacopone heard the songs of the pilgrims as they passed by, dragging their children with them, and carrying on their backs their aged fathers, to seek a pardon at the tombs of the apostles. And while two hundred thousand strangers at once inundated the basilicas of Rome, while penitent sinners there found peace, he, crushed by severity, had no share in the joys, prayers, or the sacraments of the Christian world. He then addressed a second letter to the Pope, more humble and more supplicating than the first:

"The shepherd, for my sin, has rejected

me from the sheepfold, and my bleatings are of no avail in opening the door. O Shepherd! why dost thou not respond to my groanings? For long have I called, but I have not been heard.

"I am like the blind man who cried out on the road. When the passers-by overtook him, he cried the louder: 'O God! have pity on me.'

"'What is thy request?' said the Lord.

"'Lord, that I may receive my sight! That I may sing with a loud voice the Hosanna of the children!'

"I am the servant of the centurion, and I do not deserve that thou shouldest descend under my roof. It is enough if thou wilt grant me absolution in writing. Thy word will release me from my dwelling among swine.

"I have dwelt too long under Solomon's Porch, at the edge of the Piscina. A great tumult has taken place in the waters during these days of pardon. Time passes, and I still await the command to rise, take up my bed, and return to my dwelling. . . .

"The young girl died in the house of the chief of the synagogue. The condition of

my soul is worse, for it is weighed down by the yoke of death. I beseech thee to lead me by the hand to St. Francis, that he may give me my place at the table beside my brothers.

"Doomed to hell, I have already reached the entrance.

"Religion, who was my mother, heads a great funeral procession. She would hear thy mighty voice saying to me:

"'Old man, arise.' Then the tears which she has shed over my old age would change into canticles of joy."

Even these moving appeals did not relax the severity of Boniface VIII. We are told even that one day, when passing in front of the cell where Jacopone languished, he leaned over the bars: "Well, Jacopone," cried he, "when will you leave the prison?" "Holy Father," answered the religious, "when you come in." It was not long before this prediction was fulfilled. On the 7th of September, in the year 1303, Sciarra Colonna, nephew of the cardinals of that name, and William de Nogaret, emissary of Philip le Bel, entered into Anagni at the

head of three hundred horsemen, forced open the doors of the palace, and laid a sacrilegious hand on the Pontiff, who a month later died of grief. The whole of Christendom was moved by the news. Several even among the political enemies of Boniface remembered that they were Christians, and Dante lashes in immortal verse those who had made Christ prisoner in the person of His vicar.

Jacopone was absolved from excommunication when Benedict XI, successor of Boniface, by a bull dated the 25th of December 1303, annulled the penalties pronounced against the Colonna and their supporters. He found in the convent of the Brothers Minor, at Collazone, the repose of his last years. It is a joy to picture in this peaceful spot the old disarmed champion and the impetuous character who was still filled with tenderness, not only for God but for men. A very beautiful friendship united him to Brother John of Alvernia, in whom the soul of St. Francis seemed to live again. One day when he knew that he had succumbed to a quartian fever and was terribly afflicted in body and mind, he addressed to him some verses and

a present. The verses exhorted Brother John to suffer, just as a metal vase suffers the blows of a hammer which mould it. They reminded him that grief is an atonement for the sinner—a glory for the man without sin.

The offering which accompanied this epistle was composed of two Latin sentences:

"I have always considered, and I shall consider it a great thing to know how to rejoice in God. Why? Because in those hours of enjoyment, humility is mingled with reverence.

"But I have considered, and I still consider it the greatest thing to know what it is to be bereft of God. Why? Because in these hours of trial, faith works without witness, hope without expectation of reward, and charity without any sign of divine benevolence."

It is the whole essence of Christian asceticism, and the *Imitation* contains no more substantial doctrine.

But at the same time the canticles of St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross do not reveal more tender passions than the following little poem, the work of Jacopone's old age,

and, as it were, the last sound of that chord which was about to break:

"O Love, divine Love! Why hast Thou taken possession of me? Thou seemest to have become enamoured of me to the point of folly! I will give Thee no rest. Thou hast laid siege to my five doors: hearing, sight, taste, smell, and touch.

"If I make use of the gate of sight, all that I see is love. In all shapes Thou hast imprinted Thyself, Thou art beneath all colours. . . .

"If I make use of the gate of hearing to find peace, what do all sounds symbolise to me? Always Thee, O Lord! And all that I hear tells only of love.

"If I make use of the gate of taste, or smell, or touch, I again find Thy image in all created things. Love, I am filled with the desire to escape Thee!

"Love, I flee, in order to release my heart from Thee. I see that Thou dost transform me, and makest me to become a love so like Thee that I no longer dwell in my own heart, and I can no longer find my way back there.

"If I perceive in a man some evil, or vice, or temptation, I transform myself and enter

into him; I penetrate to the depths of his grief. O boundless Love, what a miserable soul hast Thou undertaken to love!

"O dead Christ! lay Thy head upon me, draw me from the sea to the shore. Here Thou makest me to languish at the sight of Thy wounds. Oh! why hast Thou suffered them? Thou hast desired them in order to save me."

Towards the end of 1306, Jacopone, full of years, broken by the strain of divine love, fell sick, and became assured of the approach of death. His companions urged him to ask for the sacraments of the Church, but he declared that he would wait for Brother John of Alvernia, whom he tenderly loved and from whose hands he wished to receive the most sacred Body of Jesus Christ. At these words the Brothers began to be distressed, for there was no hope that Brother John could be warned in time to be of any avail. . . .

But the dying man, as if he had not heard them, raised himself on his bed and intoned the canticle *Anima benedetta.* He had scarcely finished this chant when the Brothers saw

two of their members in the distance, one of whom was John of Alvernia. An overpowering presentiment had drawn him to the death-bed of his old friend; he gave him first the kiss of peace and then the Holy Mysteries. Then Jacopone, radiant with joy, sang the canticle *Jesu, nostra fidanza,* after which he exhorted the Brothers to live holy lives, raised his hands to heaven, and breathed his last. It was on Christmas night, just at the moment when the priest, at the beginning of the Mass in the neighbouring church, was intoning the *Gloria in excelsis.*

The remembrance of the religious dissensions had been wiped away. There remained of Jacopone only the memory of his penitence, the example of the love of God revealed in him in the highest possible degree, and lastly his popular songs which stretched like a rainbow over the mountains of Umbria. The ignorant and the poor loved this holy man who had sung for them, and they hastened to his tomb. Jacopone received a public beatification, and was placed among the number of the blessed. It is true that neither the mention nor the date of his beatification are to be found in the *Annals of the Order of St.*

Francis. But it is recorded that, in 1596, the Bishop, Angelo Cesi, raised in the church of St. Fortunato of Todi a monument in which he placed the remains of the holy penitent; he had engraved on it this inscription: "These are the bones of the Blessed Jacopone de Benedetti, da Todi, Brother Minor, who, having become incensed for the love of Christ by a new device, deceived the world and ravished heaven."

Often the spirit of schism has sought to justify itself by the conduct of the saints who exposed with harsh words the corruptions of the clergy, or whom the evil of the time placed in conflict with the rulers of the Church. Those who search through history to find the enemies of the papacy are careful not to forget Jacopone. But exactly that which they wished to turn to the confusion of Catholicism has been her glory. Rome did not fear to allow at her gates, in a town in the papal province, the public beatification of this holy but misguided man. She had punished with temporal punishment the mistake of a moment; but she allowed a virtuous life to be rewarded with infinite honours. The Church, in pardoning the violence of

Jacopone, showed once more that she had sounded the depths of the human heart, and that she had understood its inconsistencies, for there is in the heart of man a stern, jealous love, incapable of suffering anything imperfect in that which it loves. Its language is harsh, and strangers often mistake it for the language of hatred; but members of the family know what tenderness is hidden beneath these transports.

We know now the poet; it is time to open his book, and to seek beneath the dust of its sadly neglected pages some of the most beautiful inspirations of Catholic mysticism.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

Page 190. Orlandini, *Corografia fisica, storica, statistica d'Italia,* tom. x. OZANAM.

Page 190. In mediæval education the curriculum included grammar, rhetoric, and logic or jurisprudence. These three subjects formed the *Trivium* (Lat. for cross-road, *i.e.* where three roads meet). The trivium and quadrivium (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy) together made up what are known as the seven liberal arts.

Page 191. Wadding, *Scriptores ordinis Minorum,* cum supplemento Sbaraleæ, p. 366; Id., *Annales ordinis Minorum,* tom. v., ad ann. 1298; Rader, *Viridarium Sanctorum.* Savigny, *Histoire du droit romain au moyen age.*

Le poesie spirituali del B. Jacopone de Todi, frate minore con le scolie et annotazioni di frà Francesco Tresatti, da Lugnano; Venezia Misserini, 1617, lib. i. sat. 2, stan. 7, 13, 14, 15; Tiraboschi, *Storia della Lett. Ital.,* tom. ix. lib. i. cap. iii. OZANAM.

Page 192. This is the first certain date that we find in Jacopone's life. No historian or public fact fixes the year of his birth. We only know that in 1298 he had joined the religious life for twenty years, and that he entered that life ten years after the death of his wife. OZANAM.

Page 192.

"That son of Italy who tried to blow,
Ere Dante came, the trump of sacred song,

In his bright youth amid a festal throng—
Sate with his bride to see a public show.

Fair was the bride, and on her front did glow
Youth like a star; and what to youth belong—
Gay raiment, sparkling gauds, elation strong.
A prop gave way! Crash fell a platform! lo,

'Mid struggling sufferers, hurt to death, she lay!
Shuddering they drew her garments off—and found
A robe of sackcloth next the smooth white skin.
Such, poets, is your bride, the Muse! young, gay,
Radiant, adorned outside; a hidden ground
Of thought and of austerity within."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Page 193. A series of frescoes illustrating the life of Jacopone after 1268—the year of his wife's death—still decorate the walls of two rooms in Jacopone's house. These frescoes were painted by an unknown artist, about a century after Jacopone's death, and have been recently carefully restored for Count Pongelli, the present owner.

The house itself stands on a ridge of the high hill on which Todi is situated, and this ridge is known as La Piana. It is one of a row of houses overlooking the plain and adjoins an antique and disused church, San Carlo, parts of which are even more ancient than the Duomo or the primitive church of St. Fortunato.

Page 197. "Cur mundus militat sub vana gloria,
Cujus prosperitas est transitoria?
Tam cito labitur ejus potentia,
Quam vasa figuli quae sunt fragilia," &c.

Rader, *Viridarium.*

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

Page 198. Jacopone, *Poesie Spirituali*, lib. 1. sat. 1:

"Udite nova pazzia
Che mi viene in fantasia.
Viemmi voglia d'esser morto,
Perche io sono visso a torto:
Io lasso il mondam conforto,
Per pigliar piu dritta via."

OZANAM.

Page 201. Rader, Wadding, Bartholomæus Pisanus, *Opus conformitatum vitæ B. Francisci ad vitam Domini nostri Jesu Christi* (Mediolani, 1513), fo. 53, recto. OZANAM.

Page 203. Rader: "Nam de regno Franciae ego melius habeo quam rex Franciae; quia jucundor de suo bono, et honore, et commoditate, et ipse hanc jucunditatem habet cum multa sollicitudine et multis laboribus et angustiis, quae non habes ego."

Page 204. Wadding: "Ad haec Jesu Christi amore supplicia tolerarem omnia pro dæmonibus, paratus ad inferos ad diem usque supremum judicii habitare, et diutius etiam, quam diu videlicet divinae majestati videretur necessarium," &c. OZANAM.

Page 205. *Conformitat.*, f. 53, recto et verso: "Ordo autem odiendi est ut odiatur consuetudo vitiorem et diligatur esse naturae, ita quod utrumque suos servet terminos, ut nec propter servandam naturam incidat in vitium, nec propter exterminanda vitia corrumpatur natura." OZANAM.

Page 208. Wadding; Jacopone, *Poesie Spirituali*, v., xxii.:

"O giubilo del core,
Che fai cantar d'amore." OZANAM.

Page 209. *Epistola S. Bonventurae,* ann. 1266; Wadding, *Anneles minor,* ad ann. 1278, 1282; Tosti, *Storia di Bonifazio,* viii. p. 184. OZANAM.

Page 209. *Peter Morrone.*—In the year 1293, Peter Morrone, the famous hermit, became Pope much against his will. Shortly afterwards he prevailed on the Church to allow him to abdicate and return to his old hermitage. He was afterwards canonised by the name of St. Celestine V (his papal title). On his abdication various views were expressed by the poets of the day—some, like Petrarch, praising it as an act of humility and self-denial (*De Vit. Solit.*), others, like Dante, regarding it as a great refusal of doing good to the Church. Dante even goes so far as to place him in Ante-Hell among the cowards and Neutrals.

Page 211. Wadding, ad ann. 1294; Jacopone da Todi, *Poesie Spirituali,* lib. i. sat. 15:

"Che farai, Pier da Morrone?
Se' venuto al paragone.
Vederemo il lavaroto
Che in cella hai contemplato." OZANAM.

Page 212. Wadding, vol. v., 1298. The memory of Boniface VIII, too often unjustly calumniated, has been deservedly defended by Cardinal Wiseman (*Dublin Review,* vol. xv., No. 22) and by D. Tosti (*Storia di Bonifazio,* viii.). I subscribe in the first place to the impartial and personal testimony of the Cardinal of St. George, then to the judgment of the more disinterested and serious historians such as Mensi and Doellinger. Mensi appears to me to have characterised Boniface VIII with perfect impartiality: "Ingentes animi dotes contulit, quanquam saeculari, principatui quam ecclesiastico aptiores" (*Annel. eccles.,* ad. ann. 1303.) OZANAM.

Page 216. Wadding, ad. ann. 1298; Jacopone, *Poesie Spirituali*, IV. iv.:

> "Piange la Ecclesia, piange e dolura,
> Sente fortuna di pessimo stato."

As regards the laxity of the prelates, even Jacopone's denunciations are not so strong as those of St. Bernard (*Epistol.*, 42, homil. 4) and of St. Antony of Padua (*Opera*, Paris, 1641, p. 261). OZANAM.

Page 216. "O papa Bonifazio,
Molto hai jocato al mondo.
Penso che jocondo
Non te porrai partire."

This satire, which is omitted in the Venetian edition, 1617, is found in the principal edition—Florence, 1490—and in two manuscripts at the Bibliothèque Nationale. It is attributed to Jacopone by his biographers, but it is universally believed to have been composed before the imprisonment of the poet, while there are two incontestable allusions contained in it referring to the criminal attempt at Anagni and to the death of Boniface VIII:

> "Fu la tua invenzione,
> Subito in ruina!
> Preso eri in tua magione,
> E nullo se trovone
> A poter te garire."

And further on:

> "Pensavi per augurio
> La vita prolungare . . .
> Vedemo per penato
> La vita sterminare."

Then follows the account of an orgy which was to have profaned the church of St. Peter on one of the most solemn days of Holy Week. In it may be apparent the accusations levelled against Boniface after his death, but neither the sanctity nor the brilliancy of his style may be traced therein.

Perhaps the contradictions and the numerous variations of the printed texts and manuscripts permit us to hazard a conjecture which smooths away all difficulties. Jacopone may have written against the still all-powerful Boniface the first stanzas of the song which circulated immediately among the Pope's enemies, and was by them amplified by fresh allusions, by fictitious stories, and by sacrilegious invectives. Thus we may exculpate the memory of the poet by freeing him from the greater part of his evil action and his sinful verse. OZANAM.

Page 218. Jacopone, *Poesie Spirituali*, lib. I. sat. 16:

"Che farai, fra Jacopone,
Ch' or se' giunto al paragone?
Fui al monte Palestrina
Anno e mezzo in disciplina:
Pigliai quivi la malina.
Onde n' haggio questo prigione," &c.

Page 219. Jacopone, *Poesie Spirituali*, lib. I. sat. 17:

"O papa Bonifazio,
Io porto il tuo prefatio."

Page 219. Jacopone, *Poesie Spirituali*, lib. I. sat. 19:

"Il pastor, per mio peccato,
Posto m'ha fuor del 'ovilo."

Page 222. Dante, "Purgatory," xx. 86:

> "I in Alagna see the fleur-de-lys,
> Christ, in His vicar, captive to the foe."

Wadding, Walsingham, ad ann. 1303. The Cardinal of St. George thus describes the last moments of Boniface:

> ". . . Lecto prostratus anhelans
> Procubuit, fassusque fidem, veramque professus
> Romanae Ecclesiae, Christo dum redditur almus
> Spiritus, et divi nescit jam Judicis iram."

The trial held by the council at Vienna to clear the memory of Boniface VIII proves that he repeated the articles of faith in presence of eight cardinals. Before these witnesses how could Sismondi, and after him M. Michelet, have had the courage to repeat the calumnious tales of the enemies of Boniface at his death? It only remains, indeed, to add, with Ferretus of Vicenzia, thunder and lightning, and a host of devils, in the form of blackbirds, "coming to seek the soul of this Pharaoh."

OZANAM.

Page 222. *Collazone* is situated on a hill, on the road between Perugia and Todi, about twelve miles north-west of the latter place.

Page 222. *Brother John of Alvernia,* the devoted friend of Jacopone, was a man of "wonderful life and of great sanctity." He was received into the Order of St. Francis while yet a boy, and "his heart was so kindled with the fire of love divine" that he was "uplifted unto God and rapt in ecstasy." During a period of spiritual distress he was strengthened and comforted by a vision of Christ, and was granted the power of giving forth

"marvellous and celestial words that changed the hearts of men and brought forth rich fruit of souls in whoso heard them."

Page 223. Jacopone, *Poesie Spirituali*, lib. II. xxi.

Page 225. Jacopone, *Poesie Spirituali*, lib. VI. xi.:

"O amor divino amore,
Perche m'hai assediato?"

Page 226. Jacopone is often called blessed or saint, but has not been beatified or canonised by the Church. At different times efforts have been made in this direction—lastly in the years 1868 and 1869 the *postulator* of the Causes of Saints of the Friars Minor collected all the documents proving the "cultus ab immemorabile" paid to Jacopone in order to obtain its official confirmation. The chief obstacle to the confirmation of this "cultus" lies in the part Jacopone took against Boniface VIII and the satires he wrote against this much calumniated pope (*Cath. Encyclopædia*).

Page 227. Jacopone's body was brought to Todi and buried in the church of the Poor Clares of Montecristo or Montesanto, outside the walls of Todi. In 1433 it was discovered in Montecristo and removed to the Franciscan church of St. Fortunato inside the town, where the tomb is still to be seen with the beautiful Latin inscription:

"Ossa B. Jacoponi de Benedictis,
Tudertini, Fr. Ordinis Minorum,
Qui stultus Propter Christum
Nova Mundum arte Delusit,
Et Coelum Rapuit,
Obdormivit in Domino.
Die xxv. Decembris Anno MCCCVI.

CHAPTER V

THE POEMS OF JACOPONE

It remains for us to consider how the genius of a poet suddenly awoke in the mind of a saint. It is a present-day fashion to look to the sources of paganism for poetic inspiration. But the poems of Jacopone will show us what the Gospel could do to feed the imagination; not the Gospel weakened by the inventions of rhetoricians and adapted to the style of the secular epic, but the Gospel with all its weighty commandments and its awesome mysteries.

When Jacopone abandoned worldly fortune and fame and the excitement of earthly publicity, he renounced all that pertains to the intellectual life. His friends might deplore the fact that such a fine intellect was about to bury itself in the silence of the cloister, but they were deceived, for by denying himself such joys he brought about his spiritual deliverance.

Poetry is born of the mind of a poet as the statue is born of the marble; she is imprisoned there, and she must be brought forth. Just as the chisel splinters the blocks of stone, in which the shape conceived by the sculptor is impressed, so penitence, by striking repeated blows at Jacopone, removed, one after the other, the veils of sensuality, vanity, and self-interest which held shrouded the inspiration. In order to detach himself completely from intercourse with the world, he kept in the closest touch with nature; he loved now, with a more disinterested and clear-sighted love, ideal beauty which exists, though veiled from sight, in all the works of creation. In the height of his ecstasy, and when God Himself seemed to possess him, he exclaimed: "I wish to go in search of adventure; I wish to visit the valleys, the mountains, and the plains; I wish to see if my lucky star will guide me to my sweet love.

"All that the world contains urges me to love. The beasts of the fields, the birds, the fish of the sea, all that soar in the air, all creatures sing in the presence of my love." When a soul hears this song of the creatures she quickly echoes it: the rhythm springs

spontaneously from the inspired lips. Moreover, when Jacopone entered the cloister he found it already resounding with the songs of St. Bonaventura and St. Francis; therefore it is not surprising that he should have added to them, surpassed them, and that this convert, zealous in prayer and fasting, should have judged such poems to be immortal.

He had to choose between the style of his two masters, between the Italian songs of St. Francis and the Latin sequences of St. Bonaventura. The sequence, in rhymed syllabic verses, pleased the ears of the people through its cadence, which was more easily grasped than the learned prosody of the ancients. Introduced into the Church in the time of St. Augustine, adopted in the schools of the Middle Ages, it reached its prime in the thirteenth century. St. Thomas had written his admirable prose works for the feast of the Holy Sacrament, and the threatening stanzas of the *Dies Irae* attributed to Pope Innocent III were intoned in the churches. Jacopone had his lament of the grief-stricken Virgin sung there, and composed the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa.* The Catholic liturgy has nothing more touching than this sad plaint, whose

regular stanzas fall like tears; so tender that it breathes a divine grief and an angelic consolation; so simple in its popular Latin that women and children can understand half of it by means of the words, the other half by the melody and by the promptings of the heart. This incomparable work would suffice to make Jacopone famous, but at the time that he composed the *Stabat* of the Calvary he conceived also the idea of the *Stabat* of the Cradle, in which the Virgin Mother was to figure in all the joy of childbirth. He wrote it in the same metre and in the same rhyme, so that it is impossible to doubt which should come first, the song of sorrow or the song of joy. However, posterity has chosen between these two rival pearls; and while she has affectionately preserved the one, she has neglected the other.

I believe that the *Stabat Mater Speciosa* has never been edited; and when I try to translate some stanzas of it, I feel that the untranslatable charm of the language, the melody and the primitive *naïveté*, has eluded me:

"The gracious Mother was standing:
She lingered joyously near the bed of straw, where the tender infant lay.

JACOPONE IN ECSTASY BEFORE THE VIRGIN.

From the "Laude di Frate Jacopone da Todi,"
Florence, 1490.

She was thrilled and transfixed with the joy that illumined her heart—
What man is he who would not rejoice if he saw the Mother of Christ enjoying such bliss?
Who would not share Her joy if he beheld the Mother of Christ fondling Her child.
She saw Christ among the beasts and pierced with cold in order to atone for the sins of His race.
She saw Christ, Her tender infant, wailing but adorned in a mean shelter.
The dwellers of the sky came to sing with great joy before the Christ born in the manger.
The old man and the Virgin remained standing, in silence, their hearts dumb with surprise."

The charm of this short description recalls an old painting of Lorenzo de Credi. In that picture the Infant Jesus is lying on the ground on a bed of straw; near by stands St. Joseph leaning on his staff, and the Virgin Mary on her knees, meditating as a saint and revealing at the same time all the joy of a young mother. At the sides and behind her hover the angels; and the painter has not forgotten the ox and the ass, those two faithful servants with whom the human race shared the joy of Christmas.

Several other Latin compositions are to be found among the works of Jacopone. But

this language of scholars was too formal for the lowly aims of the convert; and just as he had refused holy orders in order to remain a lay brother, so he abandoned Latin in order to compose, not even in the Italian tongue which Dante calls the tongue of the court, but in that dialect of the Umbrian hills spoken by the humblest labourers and peasants. Thus his genius found utterance, and, having discovered its natural channel, it exercised itself freely on an infinite number of subjects, treating in turn of the most important questions of Christian metaphysics, the quarrels which rent the Church, and the mysteries which gave her consolation.

The total number of Jacopone's poems does not amount to less than two hundred and eleven, which are arranged in seven volumes. But they may be classified under three principal headings: theological poems, satires, and little compositions written to popularise a sacred thought or to celebrate a festival.

In spite of the fact that the penitent of Todi wished to bury in obscurity his studies and his knowledge, we know enough of him already to rank him with the great theologians. We have not forgotten the poem in which,

after withdrawing from the disputes of the schools, he bids farewell to doctors and books in order to find a shorter path to truth. But we must not pay too much heed to these farewells to learning which so many great minds have taken, and which have not prevented them from returning to its dictates and from living and dying in its service. When Jacopone thought to abandon philosophy he merely chose between the factions which divided it, and left the ranks of dogma to pass into those of mysticism. There he found another school which began with Dionysius the Areopagite and continued with Scotus Erigena, Hugh and Richard of St. Victor, down to the time of St. Bernard. In Italy especially the inspiration of mysticism extended its influence to the solitudes of Fonte Avellana, of Vallombrosa, and of Flora, and had given birth to several generations of contemplatives. The spirits awakened by the loud cries of St. Peter Damien, and induced by the revelations of the Abbot Joachim to the verge of heterodox mysticism, were in danger of falling over the precipice had not Bonaventura led them by less perilous paths, and stayed them on an eminence whence they

could contemplate God with safety. Jacopone followed these guides; at each step he was clearly inspired by their memories, or rather illumined by their lights.

Before beginning to analyse a system disputable on several points, we must bear well in mind that there exists an unassailable mysticism which forms the basis of all religion. For all religion aims at uniting men to God by love and mercy, and by supernatural links. Without this essential mysticism there would be no Christian theology; it inspires St. Thomas even as Bossuet; and it is the practice of unbelievers to identify it unjustly with those special doctrines in which error is mixed with truth.

The essence of mystic philosophy is to recognise in ourselves those illuminating intuitions which suddenly, in a moment of emotion, reveal to us truths which we have vainly sought by the aid of reason. But these sudden visions only illumine the soul at the moment when she forgets herself, when, by a disembodied flight, she frees herself from the passions and sensations. There are indeed lights hidden from science which are revealed to the soul; we are endowed with a moral

intuition which is a surer guide to the goal of truth than the logical faculty of man. That is why all mystics begin by proclaiming the inadequacy of reason. Jacopone goes further; in language which recalls less the moderation of St. Bonaventura than the vehemence of St. Peter Damien, he unhesitatingly rejects Aristotle and Plato, the learned traditions of antiquity, and the wiles of contemporary scholasticism; and in the theological training of the Paris University, which had just spread abroad so many doctrines, he saw only the pride of learning and the vanity of arguments.

"Paris," says he, "has destroyed Assisi, and their lecturers have put us on the wrong track." To the controversies of this celebrated school, to their theses of "quolibet" proposed and maintained against all assailants, he opposes the last proof to which every soul should submit, in which all sophistries will prove of no avail against the syllogisms of the eternal Judge. Moreover, he praises the wisdom which shrinks from the wiselings: "Vainly they come, armed with several keys, to force the door closed to them. . . . True wisdom teaches men by love, and reveals itself to pure hearts."

However, when they would be more venture-

some, the mystics find the path they have chosen no less laborious than that of their opponents. In seeking to avoid the intricacies of logic they plunge into the abyss of morality, and for this very reason they were led back to the study of man. Their first care is to disentangle the confusion of fallen nature, and to separate the opposed passions which strive for mastery. Like all the Christian moralists, Jacopone reduces the disorders of the will to seven. Five have their origin in the mind—pride and the four daughters to whom she gives birth to be the scourge of the world—they are: envy, wrath, sloth, and avarice. Two others are born of the flesh; they are gluttony and lust. We are not surprised that the poet recoils from assisting to generate evil, and that the soul delivered over to sin appears to him a devil. "There Pride sits upon a throne; it were better for the soul to house a demon.

"There Envy spreads her gloom; so thick a shadow envelops the heart that no vestige of any good can be seen there.

"There is kindled the fire of wrath which entices the will to do wrong: she is ever alert and eager; she grips like a wild beast.

"There rains a measureless cold which is fostered by excessive sloth.

"Brooding avarice is like the worm which rests not; she has devoured the whole heart in her greed.

"Gluttony has the insatiable appetite of serpents and dragons; she remembers not that when she rises from the table she will need to pay the cost of her greed.

"Foetid lust, like a sulphurous flame, desolates the soul which harbours such guests.

"Come, ye people, come and hear; hear, and in hearing be amazed: yesterday the soul was a hell, to-day God will make a paradise of it."

But this transformation is not the work of a day; it is accomplished in three stages which the schoolmen have called the life of Purgation, the life of Illumination, and the life of Union.

The soul must first of all feel horror in her downfall, and for that reason Jacopone has suggested a parable for it: "If the king of France had a daughter, and she was the sole heiress, she would go arrayed in a white robe, and her fair renown would spread throughout the country.

"And now, if in humbleness of mind she wedded a leper and yielded herself entirely to his will, what would be said of such a contract? O my soul, thou hast done worse in selling thyself to the deceitful world!"

The soul repents when she remembers her heavenly origin and her pristine beauty, and when she beholds the divine image whose features she preserves in a disfigured form; and in repenting her tears flow. The poet fully realised the secret power of such tears: "O tears!" he cries, "you have strength and favour: to you belong power and majesty. You go alone before the judge, and nothing shall daunt you on your journey. You shall not return void: by humility you have been able to conquer pomp, and you made captive the omnipotent God!" But repentance alone does not suffice without a firm resolve to atone, to expiate, and to uproot the evil plant of vice. The will is like the strong labourer who endures cold and heat; bending painfully to the earth, he will not leave it until he has cleared it; the thought of repose would never come to him while his field remained uncultivated."

Mortification will chastise the senses by

restraining them; she will punish hearing by severe words, taste by abstinence; smell will become inured in the service of the sick, touch will purify itself under the hair-shirt until the conquered flesh surrenders and promises to complain no more.

It is time that the purified soul take flight, and that she rise by her merit to her heights where God will now grant her power to shine. It is here that the mystics are wont to set up the ladder of the virtues. They construct it of the seven gifts of the Spirit, of the four cardinal virtues which the philosophers have recognised and the three cardinal virtues which distinguish the saints. The ladder which Jacopone conceived resembles that which Jacob in his vision saw resting on the earth and reaching to the skies; but its wood, moistened by divine dews, has put forth leaves and fruit. On the first step stand Fear and Humility, the basis of all perfection; on the second, Poverty and Generosity, which share the scorn of perishable riches; on the third, Pity and Compassion; on the fourth, Obedience and Self-denial; on the fifth, Temperance and Justice with the scales and the sword; the sixth rung bears hoary-headed Counsel, and Wisdom

with an open book on her knees; the seventh belongs to Chastity and Intelligence; on the eighth rest Power and Magnanimity armed for the fray; on the ninth, Faith and Hope; on the tenth, Perseverance who bears the Palm; and on the highest rung of all, Love with a fiery sceptre in her hand, "for it is essentially right that Love should hold the first rank, even as a crowned king and sovereign emperor." The soul which makes the ascent to the celestial height glories in her climb when she has gained the summit; she beholds with ecstasy the unbegotten, whose rays illumine all creation; she gazes on the sight and meditates. But virtue alone has not always the power to guide intelligence to those unfrequented regions. The mystics understood the necessity of granting freedom to thought, while at the same time keeping it under control. They substituted the discipline of the cell for the theories of the scholar; and Jacopone reckons, like St. Bernard, four steps which must be taken before reaching the sanctuary. The first is the reading of sacred books with the help of a pure and just intelligence; meditation comes next, and digests the substance of the text; prayer implores the eternal truth to draw aside

the last veils; lastly, contemplation takes possession; she rejoices because she has found a new philosophy, from the presence of which all others fly like the clouds.

But if it was necessary at first to imprison sentiment in order to set at liberty intelligence, as soon as intelligence has taken possession of the truth, sentiment burns to unite with the highest good. Now the soul can only be united to the highest good in proportion as she detaches herself from the baser joys; she rises even as she disburdens herself; and poverty is no longer merely the humble rule of the followers of St. Francis, it is the law which governs the spiritual world.

Jacopone distinguished three degrees of privation which he compares to the three heavens of ancient astronomy. When the soul has abandoned the passion for wealth, the pride of knowledge, and the desire for glory, then, resplendent with virtues, she resembles the starry sky. But under the glittering stars the four winds still contend for supremacy, and in the pure soul four contrary passions still strive—hope and fear, joy and grief. If she rejects these passions, if she reaches that height where the will decides

without fear and without hope, where virtue finds its motive power in herself, from that moment she becomes like the crystalline sphere, which suffers no tempests, and whose regular motion controls the movement of all the spheres. At last the soul, by a final effort, can pursue images and forms which help her to conceive the things invisible; she can divest herself even of her virtues; when she ceases to regard them as her own, and can reduce herself to nothingness, then she is like the empyrean which is based on the Nothing, but where God dwells. Truth to say, such a state has no longer a name; love dwells there without speech, without reason, without passion, in a great light enveloped in darkness. He lives and yet he lives not; his being is no longer his; transformed into the Christ, he has chosen for his will the Will of God. The poet has sung more than once of the mysteries of this annihilation; he knows the danger of it, and that is why, after having led the soul as far as this height, he warned her to beware: "When thou shalt find thyself raised to the highest summits, then it is time, my soul, to fear lest thou fall. But be diffident and humble, and banish from thy thoughts vain-

glory, which ever urges human nature to take for itself some benefit. Give thanks to the sovereign power, and say to him: 'O my life! I pray you to preserve me. As for me, I know not if I am evil and sinful; but your favour certainly comes from you alone.'"

Indeed, we are on the edge of the abyss, and when Jacopone would make the soul pass through the Nothing to lead her to God, the extravagance of his language recalls the Indian pantheism, which proclaims as the highest joy eternal apathy, annihilation of the human person in the divine infinitude. When he lauds this repose, in which all fear and hope become extinct, when he is no longer anxious for his safety, and when he asks for hell in order to carry love there, he is very near the quietism into which the false mystics of his day slipped.

While the divisions of the Order of St. Francis gave birth to the Brothers Spiritual, many of the latter, inspired by the passion of contradiction and innovation, propounded a doctrine which some years after was to arouse the anxiety of the Church. "Just as the kingdom of God the Father, as symbolised in the Old Testament, gave place to the rule of

the Son which had its basis in the New, in the same way it was held that the time had arrived when the coming of the Holy Spirit should be accomplished, when an eternal Gospel should be established on the ruins of temporal precepts. In the new condition, man, without leaving the earth, might attain to the perfection of the blessed, and, as a result, to their liberty and their sinlessness. Henceforward, law would no longer bind him; he would forbid himself the practice of the virtues, lest it disturb his peace; and reason, mistress of the senses, would no longer fear to grant them the desires which they entreat."

These dreams of the cell were preached in the public square, and gave rise to thousands of sects under the name of Fraticelli and of Beghards, put Italy into a state of ferment, and were a menace to Christianity. But the humility of Jacopone saved him from these delusions. Even in the wildest ravings of ecstasy he was obsessed by the feeling of his weakness; he never knew the height from which the soul might fall, nor the thoughts which assume merit for deeds. This servant of true love denounced in wrathful indignation those whom he called the adepts of false

love; and the very invectives with which he lashed them give us a vivid insight into contemporary controversies. "False love does not recognise excess; it overthrows laws, statutes, and all well-regulated custom; it claims to have arrived at that height where no decree is needed. . . .

"But thou, Charity, who art life, thou dost never overthrow laws: thou observest them all; and where thou findest no law, there thou establishest it. . . .

"Yes, all action is lawful, but not to every one: to the priest the sacrifice, to the husband the marriage-bed, to the magistrate the sword.

"He who lives without law, without law he will perish. Whoever takes that road hastens to hell. There all the disorders hated by God come to engulf him; those who sinned together will suffer together."

Though it has been possible to characterise, by a rapid survey, the mystic poems of Jacopone, it has been at the risk of spoiling them by this analysis and by ascribing to them the unity of a theological system.

Without doubt a rigorous chain of unswerving principle binds all the spoken words

of Jacopone; but his poems escape that bond, they contradict each other yet harmonise. In the same way order rules in the hive, but not in the swarm which leaves the hive in order to steal honey from the flowers. Let us consider the compositions of this erratic genius; these are indeed sublime when he lauds the wooing of the soul and divine love, ironical and colloquial when he records the strife between the mind which wishes to repent and the body which kicks against the scourge, ingenuous and fascinating when he describes the array of the soul summoned to the feasts of Paradise. Passing hastily over many curious poems, we pause only at one of the most striking, viz. a poem of 440 lines, in which, in a form borrowed both from the drama and the epic, the poet aims at celebrating the redemption of human nature:

The Poet. "Man, in the beginning, was created virtuous; he despised this great privilege through excessive folly. His downfall was precipitate. Law demands that his reascent should be laborious. He who cannot trace the path loses himself in the maze of madness; but he who clears the passage finds

glory, and, as he journeys from the depths, he has the foretaste of Paradise.

"When man sinned for the first time he deranged the whole order of love; he was so absorbed in self-love that he preferred himself to the Creator; and Justice was so righteously indignant that she deprived him of all his privileges. Every virtue deserted him, and the devil became his master.

"Mercy, seeing the whole race of man thus fallen and lost, hastily summoned together her daughters; from their number she chose a trusty messenger, and commanded her to go and seek man on this earth below, where he was overwhelmed with despair. Penitence, entrusted with the embassy, set out with all her train.

"Penitence first put into the heart of man fear, which cast out false security; she put shame there, and finally great sorrow for having offended God. . . .

"But by none of these means did man gain satisfaction. For, having fallen by his own fault, he must needs raise himself by his own efforts: the angel could not continue to help him. . . . Penitence sends Prayer to the Court of Heaven.

"'I demand mercy,' said she, 'and not justice.'

"As soon as Mercy entered into the Heavenly Court:

"'Lord, I weep for my heritage, of which Justice has despoiled me. In afflicting man, it is I whom she has mortally wounded, and she has robbed me of all my honour.'"

Justice. "Lord, law was given to man. He criminally scorned it. I have pronounced the penalty, and I have not measured it by the offence. Examine my verdict and amend it, if it be excessive."

God the Father. "O my Son, my Supreme Wisdom! in Thee dwells the whole secret of man's Redemption, which our counsel decrees for him, and which will make the heavenly realms quiver with joy."

God the Son. "O my beloved and revered Father! in your bosom have I always dwelt, and I will always cling to the virtue of obedience. Let only a suitable dwelling be found for me, and I will establish that peace in which both Justice and Mercy shall preserve their rights."

At this point the poet relates the creation of Mary, the Annunciation, the Holy Infancy:

"In the same way as Adam was formed from virgin soil, said the Scriptures, so of a Virgin was born the Christ, Who came to atone for Adam's sin. He was born in the great cold of winter, and though He was born in the land of His forefathers, no one granted Him shelter or clothing.

"The Virtues assembled before God, uttering great lamentations: 'Lord, behold the widowhood to which we are condemned through the crime of others. Wed us to some one who will deliver us from shame, and restore to us respect and honour.'"

God the Father. "My daughters, go seek My well-beloved, for I will betroth you to Him. Into His hands I commit you, so that under His protection you may have rest and unsullied honour which will win for you the admiration of mankind. And when you surrender Him again to Me, I will raise Him above the skies."

The seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit come to make the same complaints, and God the Father sends them also to the Redeemer. Lastly, the seven Beatitudes appear.

The Beatitudes. "Lord, we are pilgrims born in your realm; give us shelter. We have made our pilgrimage in winter and

summer, passing bitter days and cruel nights. Everyone spurns us, and thinks himself wise in so doing, for we are more detested than death."

God the Father. "Man is not yet worthy of harbouring so great a treasure. I grant you a home with Christ; you will serve as a beacon to Him, and will point Him out to the earth; and you will say, 'Behold the master of our redemption!'"

The Poet. "Our dearly loved Redeemer has spoken to Justice on our behalf."

Justice. "Lord, if it please you to pay the debt which man has contracted, you can readily do so, since you are both God and man. You alone can satisfy me, and willingly I make a compact with you."

Mercy. "Lord, the infirmity of man is so great that he can in no wise be healed, unless you remove the frailty of whoever is, was, and shall be throughout all the ages. Thus you will console me, who have grieved so piteously."

The Christ. "Your demand is wise, and I will satisfy it. I am intoxicated with love to such a degree that I shall be deemed a madman: so pitiful is the redemption that

I am to achieve, so heavy the ransom that I pay! That man may know how much I love him, I will die for his sin."

At the prayer of Mercy, Christ prepares a bath in which man shall be purged from all stains and restored to his pristine purity. But Justice will evolve a holy remedy, and not until he has renounced the devil shall man enter the baptismal font. Then Confirmation is instituted, and, after, the Eucharist and the other Sacraments, and in each of them Christ performs the work of Justice and Mercy. The seven Virtues are united to the seven Sacraments, and the seven Gifts have come to celebrate their nuptials with the Virtues.

From their union the seven Beatitudes shall have birth:

"Peace has entered into the heart of man; and now," concludes the poet, "let us pray the Holy Trinity to pardon us for our sins."

The simplicity, movement, and life of this composition cannot be too highly praised. The allegories which the poet invented do not conform to the traditions of Christian art. Since the fourth century, Prudentius, describing in his *Psychomachia* the combat between the Virtues and the Vices, had personified

Faith and Idolatry, Chastity and Lust, Patience and Anger. Three hundred years after Jacopone, Calderon enlivened the scene of his *Sacramental Altars* by mingling allegorical and historical figures, Adam and Christ with Understanding and Will, David and Abigail with Chastity and Lust. Painting had the same devices; and when Taddeo Gaddi, in the beautiful Spanish Chapel at Florence, wished to depict the triumph of St. Thomas Aquinas, he placed the holy teacher on a raised seat, surrounded by angels, prophets, and evangelists, but he painted below fourteen women of great beauty, to represent the seven Sciences and the seven Virtues. Allegory, which only lends worn-out legends to the artists of learned ages, flourished in the hands of the men of the Middle Ages. The faith with which they burned was revealed in their creations; they came to believe in their fictions, and adorned them with the simplicity, naturalness, and verve which make them live.

The poem of the Redemption of human nature, with its beautiful stanzas of eight hendecasyllabic lines, has indeed the fascina-

tion of an epic; but the true lyrical spirit is revealed in the following canticle in which Jacopone represents Christ in search of the wandering soul:

The Angels. "O omnipotent Christ! on what quest are you? Why do you wander thus wretchedly like a pilgrim?"

Christ. "I have taken a bride to whom I had surrendered my heart. I decked her with jewels to win her honour, to my shame she has deserted Me. That is why I wander in grief and woe. I lent her my form and likeness. . . .

"In order that all her virtues might be exercised, I wished the soul to have the body as a servant. It would have served her faithfully if she had not spurned it!

"I created for her all creatures, that she might have occasion to exercise her authority. She has made those benefits for which she ought to love Me the motive for her hostility towards Me."

The Angels. "Lord, if we find her and she wishes to return, may we tell her that Thou dost pardon her?"

Christ. "Bid My wife return and not suffer

Me to die such a grievous death. For her I would die, so great is the love I bear her.

"With great joy I pardon her, I give her back the ornaments with which I had decked her. . . . I shall no longer remember all her crimes."

The Angels. "Sinful soul, bride of so great a Spouse, why is thy beautiful countenance so degraded? And why have you fled from Him Who would yield you so much love?"

The Soul. "When I think on His love I die of shame. He had placed me in great honour, to what depths have I now fallen? O miserable death! how hast thou encompassed me?"

The Angels. "Ungrateful sinner, return to thy Lord. Do not despair: He dies for love of thee. . . . Do not doubt His welcome, and tarry no longer."

The Soul. "O compassionate Christ! where shall I find Thee, O my Love? Hide Thyself no longer, for I die of grief. If anyone has seen my Lord, may He tell me where he has found Him!"

The Angels. "We have found Him hanging on the Cross, we have left Him dead there,

bruised by the blows. He wished to die for thee. He has paid a great price for thee."

The Soul. "As for me, I will lament with a heartfelt lamentation. It is love that has killed Thee, Thou hast died for love of me. O frenzied love, on what wood hast thou hanged Christ!"

We have followed Jacopone into an ideal world which he fashioned according to his own will, peopled with angels and virtues, and dazzling with eternal truths. It is time to descend with him into the world of realities, and to see him in conflict with men such as sin has made them. Jacopone is not at all like that marvellous Angelico of Fiesoli, who, after tracing the joys of paradise with an inspired brush, fails in depicting hell, and who must needs imprint his innocence on the faces of the damned and his candour on the countenances of the demons.

On the contrary, when the penitent of Todi frees himself from his ecstasies in order to describe the disorders of contemporary society, such is the power of his pictures that one questions if he has not intentionally exaggerated them.

It is not sufficiently realised how great was the evil of the Middle Ages. During those centuries in which Christianity is generally believed to have held peaceful sway over regenerate souls, two causes, little known, endangered the faith and deteriorated contemporary manners. On the one hand, there were the memories of paganism, more vivid than one would credit, superstition carried to such excess that in Florence the statue of Mars, wrested from his temple and borne to the Old Bridge, inspired feelings of awe in the populace. Dualism was revived in the heresy of the Albigenses, and epicurean materialism, under the name of Averrhoës, invaded the schools. On the other hand, there was the ancient leaven of barbarism, the instinct of flesh and blood. In vain did the Church preach respect for human life: this age gloried in the spectacle of death; it found satisfaction in ceaseless wars, in vengeance, and in brutal punishments.

Ugolino died of hunger with his sons; Eccelino the Cruel in one day burnt eleven thousand Paduans. At the same time concupiscence, punished in the monasteries, held sway in the palaces: she urged the kings to notorious divorces, the torments of so many popes; she

peopled the seraglios of Frederick II and of Manfred. The vessels which bore the Crusaders brought back all the vices of the East, and in consequence of the immorality which followed the Holy Wars, St. Bernard had to defend himself for having preached them.

But if the Middle Ages had the misfortune to experience evil, they had the merit of hating it. They did not exercise our caution and our nicety. The wise men of those days did not fear to lose respect by proclaiming the vices of the great. If corruption penetrated into the sanctuary, the scourge which drove the sellers from the temple passed from the hands of Peter Damien to those of Gregory VII, and from St. Bernard to Innocent III. These centuries of inspiration were also centuries of polemics, they did not deny themselves either invective or sarcasm. Beneath the fine statues of holy bishops, which adorned the threshold of the cathedrals, were grotesque figures of evil priests and apostate monks. The poetry of the troubadours also was divided into two classes: the *chanson* to celebrate courage and beauty, and the *sirvente* to lash cowardice. Is it therefore surprising that Jacopone reflected the spirit of his age, and that he wrote satires,

that he violated the idealistic principles of art, by intermingling the grotesque and the sublime?

The satires of Jacopone are not addressed to kings, or to the lords of the Italian towns; we must not expect to find the great crimes of the thirteenth century denounced in them. Written in the language of the people, they expose in the first place the sins of the people, the disorders which deprive the poor of the merit of their toils and tears. From these sources are derived the vivid and sometimes repellent images under which the poet represents Avarice, Lust, and Pride, in order to expose them to the hatred and scorn of the multitude. Sometimes, like the gravediggers of Shakespeare, he picks up the head of a dead man to ask him news of those eyes which dart forth flame, of that tongue more biting than the sword. Sometimes he drags the sinner before the tribunal of the sovereign Judge, and makes the devil speak. "Lord," says Satan, "Thou createdst this man according to Thy good pleasure, Thou grantedst him discretion and favour; yet he never kept one of Thy commandments. It is just that he should be rewarded by him whom he has served.

"He knew well what he was doing when he exacted usury, when he gave false measure to the poor.

"In my court he shall have such payment as is just.

"If he saw any company of dames and maidens, he would hasten to them with his instruments and new songs: in this way he seduced young people. In my court I have pages who will teach him to sing."

To the accusations of Satan the guardian angel adds his witness; the sentence is pronounced. The devils carry off the guilty one; they bind him fast by a great chain, and they lead him away harshly to hell. "Come," cries the escort armed with pitchforks, "come to meet the damned." All the dwellers of the infernal regions assemble, and the sinner is cast into the flames.

Women who have inspired so many poets have also stimulated the scorn of the satirist. But the penitent, the worldling converted by the death of a Christian wife, could not treat such a subject with the licence of Juvenal, nor yet with the gaiety of the fabliaux. Doubtless he knew that, in the words of a contemporary, there is no artist who uses more

implements, tools, and industry in the practice of his art than the women of Italy use in the care of their person. He does not spare any of the artifices which the Italian women of his century used to raise their stature and to give to their complexion whiteness and brilliancy. If their delicate hands could not brandish the lance, they could use bitter words which could pierce through any shields. But that which especially moves Jacopone is the peril of the souls allured by these beautiful and dangerous creatures. "O women! consider the mortal wounds you make: in your glances you carry the power of the basilisk. The basilisk serpent kills man merely by looking at him. His poisonous eye gives death to the body. Yours, more cruel, gives death to souls; it robs them of Christ, their sweet Lord, who bought them so dearly.

"The basilisk hides and will not be seen; when it lowers its gaze it does no harm, but your misconduct is far more evil, for you deliberately seek your victims with your deadly glances. . . .

"You say that you array yourself for your lord and master; but you do not realise your intention, for you do not gain his love. If

you look only at some fool, your husband suspects you in his heart.

"Then you complain if he strikes you, if he guards you jealously, if he desires to know your secret haunts, and your companions; if he lays snares for you and deems you guilty. . . . Such sadness will overwhelm you that you will open all your veins; he will drag you into a room where the neighbours cannot hear you, and there you will encounter death."

Do not accuse the poet of exaggeration, and remember that he was writing in the century of Francesca da Rimini.

If Jacopone judged society severely, neither did he flatter the Church. When this forsaker of the world discovered in the cloister several of the vices which he had thought to escape, his shattered hope drew from him cries of vengeance. His indignation inspired him to use the weapon which the "Fathers of the Desert" had wielded, and he went about from cell to cell rebuking the licentiousness of the religious orders.

One day his muse stopped as it passed the soul of a nun who had just died in the odour of sanctity. This soul had lived fifty years in

virginity, in silence and fasting. "But I was not humble," said she, "when I heard myself called a saint, my heart swelled with pride, and for that reason God reproved me." Another time Poverty speaks. God her Father sent her to visit all classes to see if she could find shelter there. She began with the prelates, but they could not tolerate her looks, and drove her from their ranks. She heard frequent psalm-singing among the religious, but she found them wearing costly habits, and none would listen to her words. "My brothers," said she, "remember that you have promised Christ to follow Him always." And the Brothers replied: "If you do not depart at once, we will show you that there are other ways of speaking and acting."

Finally Poverty knocked at the door of the nuns. And at the very sight of that thin pale face the nuns made the sign of the cross.

"God bless you, my sisters! Once I lived in this house: I found there great honour and peace. Now it seems to me quite changed, and I do not recognise the furniture or the faces."

"What does this vile old woman want?" cried the Sisters; and the porter of the convent dismissed her with blows.

This irony, which at times became blasphemous, suited a period when the spiritual life threatened to perish, smothered beneath riches even as the good grain is choked by the thorns. St. Bernard could not believe that the fathers had tolerated all the luxuries which he saw among the monks of his century, so much intemperance in eating and drinking, such soft beds and clothes, such magnificent horses and buildings. St. Peter Damien directed his aim still higher, and did not fear to give his zeal the aid of satire when he denounced the luxury of the prelates: their tables laden with dishes richly flavoured with spices from the East, and wines of innumerable kinds sparkling in crystal goblets, beds richer than altars, and the walls hidden by tapestries, like the dead beneath their shrouds.

While the sight of these evils roused the courage of the great reformers, other souls, weaker, but no less pure, found in them only a subject for alarm, and thought to recognise in the holy place the abomination of desolation prophesied as a sign of the end of the world. That is why the Middle Ages liked pictures of the Apocalypse, and, above all, that terrible story of the Antichrist which is found again

in the fifteenth century, traced so powerfully by Luca Signorelli on the walls of the Cathedral of Orvieto. The face of the Antichrist recalls, by a horrible similarity, the adorable face of the Saviour, while at the same time it breathes forth all the passions of hell. At his feet are heaped the riches of the earth which he has distributed to his worshippers, and, on the threshold of the temple, executioners are cutting off the heads of the two prophets. But already, in the air above, hovers an angel armed with a sword, who will overthrow the impostor just as he is attempting to ascend to heaven. These pictures are no more realistic than the poem in which Jacopone da Todi aimed at depicting all the errors of his time, and which he entitled the "Combat of the Antichrist": "Now is the time to prove who has courage: the prophesied tribulation is at hand; on all sides I see it burst like a thunderbolt. The moon is darkened, and the sun veiled in shadow: I see the stars start from their spheres. The old serpent is let loose; I see the whole world in his train: he has drunk the waters of the whole earth, he thinks to swallow the river of Jordan and to devour the people of Christ.

"The sun is Christ, Who no longer makes signs to encourage His servants. We no longer see miracles which preserve the faith of the people: evil people spread abroad doubt, they insult us evilly, and true arguments cannot move them.

"The moon also is darkened, she who formerly lighted the world at night; she who was our guide is overshadowed. She represents the body of the clergy who are in error and who have taken the path of evil. O Lord God! who can escape? The stars, fallen from the sky, symbolise the religious orders. Many have left the beaten track in order to explore perilous paths. The waters have risen in flood, they have covered the mountains and submerged everything. God, help us, help those who are yet afloat! . . .

"Man, arm yourself, for the hour is come: make an effort to escape this death. There never has been, there never will be so cruel, so terrible a time. The saints were filled with awe, and mad indeed seems he who does not fear."

But the satire of Jacopone is at the same time a popular sermon: it calls to mind

the outspokenness of contemporary orators, accustomed to give rein to ridicule, to amuse the crowd, if necessary, in order to convert it. The fanatic of Todi, who formerly attracted to his following children and idlers, in order to instruct them by means of parables, now continued to teach the people by his verse. The songs of the angels had announced the Christ to the shepherds: why then had Christian poesy ignored the poor? And, moreover, the Church had admitted popular canticles side by side with her solemn liturgies: she allowed legends to be recited together with the representation of mystery plays. Nevertheless these religious dramas, which were the joy of the people on this side of the mountains, seem to have penetrated later into Italy. If it is true that mystery plays were represented in the thirteenth century in Padua, in Florence, in Friuli, it is a further proof that poetry came to be associated with these spectacles. In the writings of Jacopone occur the first attempts at popular drama in the Italian language. There was indeed a series of poems for the principal feasts of the year: for the Nativity, the Passion, the Resurrection, Pentecost, the

Assumption; for the anniversaries of St. Francis, St. Clare, and St. Fortunato, the patron saint of Todi. But often the genius of the poet was not content to describe incidents; he felt impelled to make them more vivid by seeing the persons himself and causing them to be seen by others, and, concealing himself behind them, he lets the enraptured audience hear Christ Himself, the angels, and saints speak. The following are pieces whose personæ and speeches seem designed for public recitation; there is the one which deals with the Saviour and the two disciples of Emmaus, another with the apostles receiving the Holy Spirit and going forth into the world. There is, above all, a little drama of the Compassion of the Holy Virgin in which may be traced all the inspiration of the *Stabat Mater*.

The Messenger, the Virgin, the Crowd, Christ.

The Messenger. "Lady of Paradise, they have taken thy son, Christ most blessed; hasten thou and see: I think they are killing Him, they have scourged Him so cruelly."

The Virgin. "How can it be that any one

has laid hands on Him? For He has done no evil, Christ, my Hope. . . ."

The Messenger. "O Lady, hasten and come to His aid! They have spat in the face of thy son, and the crowd drags Him from one place to another. They have led Him to Pilate."

The Virgin. "O Pilate! do not torture my son! for I can prove to thee that they accuse Him wrongfully. . . ."

The Crowd. "Crucify Him! Crucify Him! The man who has made Himself king disobeys the Senate."

The Messenger. "Madam, here is the Cross which the people are bringing, and on which the true Light is to be raised."

The Virgin. "O Cross! what wilt thou do? Thou robbest me of my Son! Of what dost thou reproach Him, since there is no sin in Him? . . ."

The Messenger. "Madam, now they are seizing His hand, and now they have stretched it on the Cross: they have pierced it with a huge nail which they have driven in. Now they take the other hand; they stretch it on the Cross, and the pain bites into His flesh. Madam, the moment has come to pierce the

feet; they nail them to the wood, and they have broken His whole body with the weights which His feet bear."

The Virgin. "As for me, I will chant the funeral dirge. O Son, who wast my joy! Who has killed my Son? . . . They would have done better to rend my heart. . . ."

Christ. "Woman, why mournest thou? I wish thee to live that thou mayest encourage the followers that I have on earth."

The Virgin. "My Son, do not speak thus. I wish to die with Thee; I wish to ascend the Cross, and to die by Thy side. So shall the Son and Mother have the same tomb, since the same misfortune casts both Mother and Son into the same abyss."

Christ. "Woman, I place in thy hands My wounded heart. John, My well-beloved, shall be called Thy son. John, My mother is thine, receive her lovingly: take compassion on her, for her heart is pierced."

The Virgin. "My Son, Thy soul has escaped through Thy lips. . . . O my innocent Son! O my glorious Son, Who art gone to illumine another world, Thou art hidden from me! . . . O my fair and spotless Son, my Son of sweet countenance! Ah! for what

reason has the world desired Thy shame and Death? Noble and beloved Son, Son of a grief-stricken Mother, ah! how shamefully has this people treated Thee! And thou, John, my new son, thy brother is dead! Ah! I have felt the point of the sword which was prophesied to me! . . ."

Imagine this scene represented on Good Friday beneath the portico of a church, by Italian peasants, the most passionate of men, and you have the beginnings of Christian tragedy. Never did grief utter more heart-rending cries than these; and never did joy find more tender expression than in the carols of Jacopone, whether it be that he is leading the shepherds to the cradle or that he is guiding to the feet of the Virgin a band of pious and faithful ones who plead with her to lend them for one moment the Holy Child. These songs must be read in their native language, for their simple melody and childlike grace could never be fitly rendered in a translation. In writing them, the theologian, the critic of the Church and of the world, brings himself down to the level of children, busies himself with their pleasures, and composes canticles of such simplicity and

unparalleled sweetness as to rejoice the good spinner at the cradle of her new-born baby, or to raise to God the soul of the shepherd lost on the mountain. Just as he shared all their festivals, so also he sympathised with their cares and sorrows, and to meet these he records in sixty-six couplets a series of proverbs which constitute the philosophy of the people:

"To whom life is sweet, death is grievous.

"Learn how to extract the precious stone from the dust, a gracious word from the discourteous man, wisdom from the fool, a rose from the thorn.

"Help your enemy when you find him in danger. If the mouse can free the lion, if the fly can overthrow the bull, I counsel you to despise no one.

"When you should be humble, do not act proudly."

But I honour this poet of the poor especially when he exalts poverty. The people have never had greater benefactors than the men who taught them to bless their fate, who rendered the spade light on the shoulder of the labourer and made hope gleam in the weaver's cottage. More than once without doubt, at

sunset, when the good people of Todi were returning from work in the fields and wending their way up the hill, the men goading their cattle, the women carrying on their backs their dark-haired babies, behind them some Franciscan monks, their feet covered with dust, they were to be heard singing the song of Jacopone which mingled with the tinkling of the *Angelus* bell:

"O tender love of poverty, how deeply should we love thee!

"Poverty, my little one, whose sister is Humility: one bowl for eating and drinking sufficeth thee.

"Poverty requires nought besides bread and water and a few herbs. If a guest visit her she adds a pinch of salt.

"Poverty walks without fear; she has no enemies; she has no dread lest thieves shall molest her.

"Poverty knocks at the door; she has neither purse nor store; she carries naught with her excepting bread. . . .

"Poverty dies in peace; she makes no will; there is no need for parents and relatives to quarrel over her riches.

"Poverty, my little one, yet citizen of heaven, nothing earthly can awaken thy desires. . . .

"Poverty, great kingdom, thou hast the world in thy power, for thou possessest sovereign rule over all the goods that thou despisest.

"Poverty, thou mine of wisdom, in despising riches, the more thou humblest thy will, the more swiftly does she gain liberty. . . .

"Gracious Poverty, ever generous and joyful! Who can say that it is a base thing ever to love poverty?"

We know that this glorified poverty, which was revealed to the Middle Ages by St. Francis and his disciples, has not won the love of modern times. They accuse the Church of having set up not poverty herself, but begging and charity, which humiliate the poor and place them under an obligation which constitutes them debtors. They reproach Christian society for having invented charity as a substitute for justice. But for us, begging and alms-giving are two inseparable conditions of human destiny. We believe that Providence, before the Church, was careful to link man to man and generations to generations by a chain of benefits too heavy to lift, and that

she has succeeded in forcing the proud to ask charity and to receive it. On the one hand, there is no man so free that he is not in debt at least to his father and his country; who is not poor in worldly goods or in intellectual gifts, who does not expect them from others. What scholar has not sat at the feet of others more learned than himself, and has not borrowed light from them? The happy beg for pleasure, and the afflicted who come to weep in your presence beg one of your tears.

In harmony with this universal practice of begging, St. Francis became a beggar like his fellow-creatures in order to serve them; for the unfortunate are only relieved willingly by those in like circumstances. From another point of view, the alms which the disciples of St. Francis received, which Christianity preaches and blesses, give no encouragement to idleness. Alms should be the reward for services which are not paid. Great social services, those which a nation cannot dispense with, cannot be bought or sold or bartered for a price. Society pays for the commodities of the merchant, but she does not pay for the sacrifice of the priest, nor for the justice of the judge, nor for the blood of

the soldier. Only, she gives them bread in order that they may continue to live and to serve, but she metes it out to them with a righteous parsimony, in order that it may be manifest that she has not intended to pay them. In the same way the worthy workman who gives his work receives his wages, but the poor, who suffer and are deserving, who in the Church represent and perpetuate Christ, receive alms. That is why the great religious orders of the Middle Ages, the most learned and the most active, made profession of receiving alms publicly, and by this means rendered the practice for ever honourable; for who could say henceforward that society humiliates the poor when she rewards their deserts with the same pay as she apportioned to the teaching of St. Bonaventura and of St. Thomas Aquinas.

The aims of Jacopone were not frustrated. While so many poets were vainly awaiting in their tomb the glory which they had anticipated, the humble popularity which the penitent of Todi sought was readily meted out to his poems. This is obvious from the numerous manuscripts which were circulated in Italy, France, and Spain, and from the eight

editions published in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. While the relics of the blessed Jacopone were displayed on the altars, public piety clung to the products of his thought. His poems were edited first of all by the Calabrian Modio, one of the companions of St. Philip de Neri; then by Tresatti de Lugnano, theologian of the Order of St. Francis. Translated into the Castilian dialect, they kindled the ardour of the Franciscan body who carried the Gospel and sought martyrdom under the skies of South America, which were even more death-dealing than the natives. But a comparison between the editions and the manuscripts reveals a remarkable difference in the number of poems included.

Jacopone's collection has suffered numerous interpolations; the transcribers have introduced several canticles of the Franciscan Ugo della Panciera, and perhaps other poems whose authors we do not know.

It was a customary fate of very popular books in the Middle Ages that their pages were used to preserve compositions less certain of a lasting popularity, in the same way as it was customary to find shelter in the churches for

fragments of profane sculpture by those who wished to preserve them.

It is true that the swing of the pendulum which threatens all the famous ones of earth has caused Jacopone to be forgotten for a long time, like so many writers and painters of the century. We wish to draw forth from the shadow the figure of this poet who is so easily detached from the crowd, whom it is necessary to seek in his rags and in a cell; of this poet burning with the fire of the love of God and with political passions, humble and bold, learned and whimsical, capable of ecstasies when he contemplates, of all angry passions when he rebukes, and when he writes for the people able to descend to incredible trivialities, in the midst of which he suddenly reveals sublimity and grace. We have not overlooked his faults: he has genius; he has not taste, that restraint of the imagination which will not tolerate excess. He loves, on the contrary, repellent images; and when, for example, in expiation for his sins he would ask from God all the evils of this life, he delights in arraying a host of diseases whose very names inspire horror. But only a few pages further on in one of his mystic songs, the Virtues descend before him, all

radiant with beauty, on a ladder of flowers and light.

These contrasts recall to mind the great painter Orcagna and his "Triumph of Death." It depicts three corpses in three different stages of decomposition, some cripples, lepers who wish to die, and grinning demons. What could be more trivial? But at the same time what more pathetic and graceful than the group of young men and maidens making love to the sound of the lute, oblivious of death who is about to mow them down and whom the hermits await peacefully on their mountain, some occupied in reading the Bible, others in milking their goats? In truth, the poet and the painter reflect the spirit of their day, of a period more endowed with inspiration than with moderation, more prompt in conceiving great thoughts than persevering in carrying them out, of an age which began so many monuments and completed so few, which urged Christian reform so ardently, and which allowed so many disorders to remain, capable of everything, in a word, except that inglorious mediocrity with which the weak centuries willingly content themselves.

It is time to restore Jacopone to his place in

the cradle of Italian poetry. When he appeared all Italy resounded with the poetic concert whose preludes had greeted the dawn of the thirteenth century: the songs which had come from Sicily had awakened in Tuscany an echo which could no longer be silenced. However, the Sicilians and the Tuscans did little more than imitate the Provençals. Doubtless they had appropriated all the art of the troubadours, all the harmony of their songs, all the forms of the sonnet, the tenson, and the sirvente. But the besetting sin of this poetry is the commonplace, the flowers, the spring-time, the ladies celebrated according to the faith of others, and love sung by those who love not. Imaginations compelled to feed on borrowed ideas had recourse to memories of mythology; and the son of Venus, with his bow and arrows, came to the aid of these effete poets. Jacopone, on the contrary, had a horror of the commonplace. He imitated nothing unless it were perhaps the canticles of St. Francis and of the first Franciscans; still he far surpassed them in the number and variety of his compositions. He did not draw from the profane fountains of the ancient Parnassus, but from the source of tears, from the inexhaustible vein of grief and repentance.

For him the art of composition was not a sport but a duty, the impetuosity of his sentiments permeated his style, and lent him wings. Before the birth of Jacopone the wings of Italian poetry were already beginning to grow, but he it was who was destined to unfold them.

If Jacopone towered above his predecessors, he had the additional merit of paving the way for the greatest of his successors. It is reported that Dante knew the poet of Todi, that he loved him, and that when sent on an embassy to Philip le Bel he recited to him some poems of this religious, whose verve held in check the policy of Boniface VIII. Be it so or not, when Dante began to give utterance, not before a king but before the immense audience which the centuries have afforded him, he found assuredly minds prepared by him who preceded him as theological, satirical, and popular poet.

As theological poet, Jacopone was the first of the moderns to demand from Christian metaphysics, not only truths with which to instruct men, but beauties with which to delight them; no longer lessons but songs. At the outset nothing seemed more bold. It

seems that the introduction of scientific principle into poetry might be like casting an icy blast upon it. Science remains cold, indeed, as long as she remains in the presence of the known, but sooner or later she must touch on the unknown, on mysteries which torment her, and in consequence stifle her. In ascending the track of secondary truths, she journeys towards the first source of truth, which is also the source of beauty. Jacopone knew these roads, he explored the depths and the heights of the infinite. Whether he is giving us the whole vision of damnation in a guilty soul, or whether he is describing the mystical heavens and traversing them in order to prostrate himself before the Uncreate, what is he doing but opening to Dante the roads of hell and heaven? He had already touched on the great religious problems which his successor raised at each step, and for which he was unjustly reproached, as if it were not a stroke of genius to have constructed this spiritual paradise whose first blessing is to know and the second to love.

As a satirist, Jacopone, before Dante, censured his age and his country. Both were undeceived by human joys, both persecuted,

condemned to eat the bread of others, and they both saw without illusion, the one from the depths of his cell, the other from his exile, the evil of a century which brought about the decadence of the Middle Ages. They saw all the evil in it and little of the good; they believed in its ruin, and both, like the Jew of Jerusalem, climbed on to the crumbling ramparts of society, crying: "Woe to the town! woe to the temple!"

Jacopone did more, and by an example, sometimes reprehensible, he gave countenance to the liberties which Dante indulged in. After all, the old Alighieri loved the Church as he loved his country, with severity but with passion. If he spoke hard and unjust words against several popes, without ceasing to venerate in them the power of the keys, what insults did he not level against Florence? And yet who could say he did not love his country, when his whole desire was to have her gates open to him again, and, as he said, to go and end his days "in the beautiful cradle where he slept as a little lamb"?

Finally, as popular poet, we have heard Jacopone singing in the dialect of the peasants of Umbria. These songs are characterised

by a remarkable inequality of style, and introduce in turn the inspiration of the Bible, the formulæ of the schools, sometimes the delicacy of the troubadours, but far more often the coarseness of the goatherds and butchers. But they also reveal novelties of speech, combinations of words, and metaphors which a poet of a more cultured and less primitive society would never have used. One travels, so to speak, through his poems as if through the beautiful mountains where he lived; there may be gathered thorny plants, which, when crushed under foot, exhale a scent unknown to the people of the plain. Dante was far more conversant than Jacopone with the language of scholars; he repudiated the provincial dialects in order to adhere to what he called the idiom of the court.

However, when he had to form his style, he was not content with this colourless vocabulary which the rhymers of the day passed on from one to the other. He also sought the poetic language at its true source—that is to say, in the people; he collected forcible expressions, rude metaphors which the reapers let fall on the furrow and the pilgrim by the wayside. He did not hesitate to cull trivial

expressions in whose bitter and savage flavour he delighted. This was how he formed his own poetic style, and fixed at the same time that of his country, and it is for this characteristic of his genius that he would seem to be chiefly indebted to the Franciscan poet.

Nourished in the schools and permeated by the study of the classics, not Virgil only, but Ovid, Lucian, Statius, Dante was tempted to write in Latin, and to compose at first in hexametres the beginning of the "Inferno." But when he considered the vanity and the greed of contemporary men of letters, he scorned to toil and labour for the pleasure of these degenerate minds. In his dilemma he turned to the example of Jacopone, and by reading his poems he came to realise that the purest mysteries of faith and the loftiest speculations of philosophy could be fitly expressed in the idiom of the people. So he burned his Latin poems, and, soon after, the blacksmiths and muleteers were singing the stanzas of the *Divine Comedy*, while the doctors expounded it from their chairs. That was because Dante, as we have said, had finally fixed on the vernacular as the best medium for Italian poetry. In a word, lan-

guages without great works are like towns without buildings. Such towns are easily displaced, and can be moved from one bank of the river to the other, and from the hill to the valley. But if a great basilica, a communal palace, rises in the centre of the city, the mighty building supports as it were the houses which lean against its walls and the inhabitants who love the shade of its towers. In the same way, a literary work supports the language of which it is the model, and posterity does not readily reject it. The Italian language was living: the poem of Dante made it immortal.

In conclusion, no apology is needed for pausing over the glorious poet of whom Jacopone was the precursor, it is because Dante stands nearer than one would suppose to the religious and literary school of the disciples of St. Francis. Not that he ought to be reckoned, as he has been too readily, among the Franciscan writers, but because he exhausted all the wealth of his genius in celebrating the penitent of Assisi. It was, however, from the lessons of St. Bonaventura that he borrowed the purest lights of his mystic theology, and, above all, when the great man

died, laden with the admiration and the ingratitude of his contemporaries, he wished to be buried in the habit of the Third Order, and in the Church of St. Francis. During his stormy life he had sinned much, but in true Christian spirit he thought that the judgment of God would be more tender towards him if he presented himself before Him clothed in the livery of humility, and that the thunderbolt which does not spare the laurels of the poet would respect the raiment of the poor.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

Page 238. Jacopone, *Poesie Spirituali,* lib. vi. xxxiv.

Page 239. *St. Thomas of Celano* (*c.* 1200–1255) was one of the first disciples of St. Francis of Assisi, and joined the order probably in 1215. Soon after the canonisation of St. Francis he wrote his *Vita prima,* or *First Life,* of St. Francis by order of Pope Gregory IX. A few years later he compiled his *Vita Secunda,* or *Second Life,* which may be considered as a supplement to the first one.

St. Thomas also wrote a Life of St. Clare and a treatise on the miracles of St. Francis, and two beautiful sequences in honour of the latter saint—*Fregit victor virtualis* and *Sanctitatis nova signa.* He is also generally considered to be the author of the *Dies Irae,* though Davidsohn makes Cardinal Latino Melabrancha, nephew of Pope Nicholas III (Orsini), the author of this magnificent hymn. See Vol. II. part ii. p. 160, Davidsohn's *Geschichte von Florenz.*

Page 239. The *Stabat Mater Dolorosa,* "the most pathetic hymn of the Middle Ages or any other age," was attributed to Pope Innocent III until Wadding restored it to Jacopone. It is now ascribed to him on the authority of universal tradition. There are upwards of forty English translations of this wonderful poem, among them one by the poet Aubrey de Vere. It was first set to music by Nanini, *circa* 1620; by Astorga in 1700; and later by those great masters of Church music—Palestrina and Pergolesi—and in later times by Rossini, Dvorak, and many others.

Page 240. *Stabat Mater Speciosa.*—The *Stabat* of the

Cradle, the companion poem of the *Mater Dolorosa*, though published in the Brescia edition of Jacopone's works, was consistently overlooked until Ozanam published a translation of it in 1852, in his work *Les Poetes Franciscains*. The two poems are as strikingly similar in metre and language as they are strikingly antithetical in subject and tone. The question as to the priority of date is a disputed one. The well-known hymn-writer and translator Neale regards the *Speciosa* as the earlier from its greater rudeness of form, though at the same time the sentiment has been judged by some to be nobler and more tender than the *Dolorosa*. The following is Neale's translation of the poem:

"Full of beauty stood the Mother,
By the manger blest o'er other,
Where her Little One she lays:
For her inmost soul's elation,
In its fervid jubilation,
Thrills with ecstasy of praise.

O what glad, what rapturous feeling,
Filled that blessed Mother, kneeling
By the Sole Begotten One!
How, her heart with laughter bounding,
She beheld the work astounding,
Saw His birth, the glorious Son.

Who is he, that sight who beareth,
Nor Christ's Mother's solace shareth
In her bosom as He lay;
Who is he, that would not render,
Tend'rest love for love so tender,
Love, with that dear Babe at play?

For the trespass of her nation
She with oxen saw His station
Subjected to cold and woe:
Saw her sweetest Offspring's wailing,
Wise men Him with worship hailing,
In the stable, mean and low.

Jesus lying in the manger
Heavenly armies sang the Stranger,
In the great joy bearing part;
Stood the Old Man with the Maiden,
No words speaking, only laden
With this wonder in their heart.

Mother, fount of love still flowing,
Let me, with thy rapture glowing,
Learn to sympathise with thee:
Let me raise my heart's devotion,
Up to Christ with pure emotion,
That accepted I may be.

Mother, let me win this blessing,
Let His sorrow's deep impressing
In my heart engraved remain:
Since thy Son, from heaven descending,
Deigned to bear the manger's tending,
O divide with me His pain.

Keep my heart its gladness bringing,
To my Jesus ever clinging
Long as this my life shall last;
Love like that thine own love give it,
On my little Child to rivet,
Till this exile shall be past.

Let me share thine own affection,
Let me suffer no rejection
Of my purpose fixed and fast.

Virgin, peerless of condition,
Be not wroth with my petition,
Let me clasp thy little Son:
Let me bear that Child so glorious,
Him whose Birth o'er Death victorious,
Will'd that Life for man was won.

Let me, satiate with my pleasure,
Feel the rapture of Thy Treasure
Leaping for that joy intense:
That, inflamed by such communion,
Thro' the marvel of that union
I may thrill in every sense.

* All that love this stable truly,
And the shepherds watching duly,
Tarry there the live-long night:
Pray, that by thy Son's dear merit,
His elected may inherit
Their own country's endless light."

* "*Note.*—I cannot doubt that this is the original concluding stanza. That which Ozanam gives in the text, and which Diepenbrock translates (into German) seems to me to have been re-copied from the *Mater Dolorosa.*"
NEALE.

The following are the first lines of other Latin sequences inserted among the poems of Jacopone:

Fo. 104, *verso*: Ave fuit prima salus.
Fo. 106, *recto*: Jesu, dulcis, memoria.

Fo. 107, *recto* : Verbum caro factum est.
Fo. 108, *recto* : Crux, te, te volo conqueri.
Fo. 108, *verso* : Cur mundus militat sub vana gloria.
Fo. 109, *recto* : Ave, regis angelorum.
Fo. 111, *recto* : Stabat Mater Dolorosa.

OZANAM.

Page 240. Bibliothèque Nationale, manuscripts no. 7785, f. 109 :

" Stabat Mater speciosa
Juxta foenum gaudiosa,
Dum jacebat parvulus.

Cujus animam gaudentem
Laetabundam et ferventem,
Pertransivit jubilus.

O quam laeta et beata
Fuit illa immaculata
Mater unigeniti !

Quae gaudebat, et ridebat,
Exsultabat, cum videbat
Nati partum inclyti.

Quis est is qui non gauderet.
Christi Matrem si videret
In tanto solatio ?

Quis non posset collaetari
Christi Matrem contemplari
Ludentem cum Filio ?

Pro peccatis suae gentis,
Christum vidit cum jumentis,
Et algori subditum.

Vidit suum dulcem natum
Vagientem, adoratum
Vili diversorio.

Nato Christo in praesepe,
Coeli cives canunt laete
Cum immenso gaudio.

Stabat senex cum puella,
Non cum verbo nec loquela,
Stupescentes cordibus.

Eia Mater, fons amoris,
Me sentire vim adoris,
Fac ut tecum sentiam!

Fac ut ardeat cor meum
In amando Christum Deum,
Us sibi complaceam.

Sancta Mater, istud agas:
Prone introducas plagas
Cordi fixas valide.

Tui Nati cœlo lapsi,
Jam dignati foeno nasci
Poenas mecum divide.

Fac me vere congaudere,
Jesulino cohaerere,
Donec ego vixero.

In me sistat ardor tui,
Puerino fac me frui,
Dum sum in exilio.

Hunc ardorem fac communem,
Ne me facias immunem,
Ab hoc desiderio.

Virgo Virginum praeclara,
Mihi jam non sis amara:
Fac me parvum rapere.

Fac ut portem pulchrum fantem
Qui nascendo vicit mortem,
Volens vitam tradere.

Fac me tecum satiori,
Nato tuo inebriari,
Stans inter tripudia.

Inflammatus et accensus,
Obstupescit omnis sensus
Tali de commercio.

Fac me nato custodiri,
Verbo Dei praemuniri,
Conservari gratia.

Quando corpus morietur,
Fac ut animae donetur
Tui Nati visio."

It is possible that the following two strophes have been added by another hand: OZANAM.

"Omnes stabulum amantes,
Et pastores vigilantes,
Pernoctantes sociant

Per virtutem Nati tui,
Ora ut electi sui
Ad patriam veniant.
Amen."

Page 241. *Lorenzo de Credi* (1459–1537), a pupil of Andrea Verrocchio at the same time as Leonardo da Vinci and Perugino. He limited himself almost exclusively to the painting of panels of sacred subjects, chiefly Madonnas and Saints, Nativities or Annunciations. His style is distinguished by minute attention to detail and by deep sincerity and earnestness of thought, which latter characteristic was intensified after he had come under the influence of Savonarola. Into all his pictures he introduces charming landscape-settings. Some of his best-known pictures are the "Adoration of the Shepherds" and the "Nativity" in the Accademia Bella Arti, Florence; the "Madonna and Saints" in the Louvre; the "Madonna and Child" in the Uffizi, Florence.

Page 243. *Dionysius the Areopagite* (*c.* 500).—This pseudo-Dionysius was probably a Syrian monk who ascribed his work to Dionysius the Areopagite, the proselyte of St. Paul, and addressed his letters on mysticism to St. Paul's fellow-worker Timothy. His chief works are the treatises on the Hierarchy of Angels and on the Divine Names, and a short but most valuable tract on Mystic Theology. The influence of these works was widespread throughout the Middle Ages, and he was the accepted authority for all spiritual truths. Amongst many others Dante studied his theory of the Celestial Hierarchy, and expounds it in the "Paradiso," canto xxx., and in *Convivio*, xi. 6. In the history of mysticism, the importance of Dionysius lies in the fact that he first described how, "by persistent

commerce with the mystic visions, the soul may be raised aloft unknowingly to the union with Him Who is above every essence and knowledge." He was the first Christian mystic to propound the belief that "the most Divine and Highest of the things seen and contemplated are a sort of suggestive expression of the things subject to Him Who is above all, through which His wholly inconceivable Presence is shown, reaching to the highest spiritual summits of His most holy place; and then he is freed from them who art both seen and seeing, and enters into the gloom of the Agnosia."

Page 243. *John Scotus Erigena,* an English or Irish monk who lived in the ninth century, was one of the scholars assembled at the court of Charlemagne, and the first to establish a definite tradition of mysticism in Western Europe. He translated the works of Dionysius from the Greek into Latin, and worked up the theories into a philosophical system.

Page 243. *St. Bernard* (1091–1153), the great Abbot of Clairvaux, was the preacher of the Second Crusade. At the age of twenty he entered the Benedictine monastery of Citeaux, and later on founded the renowned abbey of Clairvaux. The Saint of Clairvaux contributed more than any other single individual to the cultus of the Virgin, which spread over Europe in the Middle Ages and left its mark on the hymnology, painting, and architecture of the period. The Lady-chapels of the period are the product of his lauds to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Page 243. *St. Peter Damien* (*c.* 988–1072) began life as a swineherd, but his brother, a priest at Ravenna, took compassion on him and educated him. He became a teacher at Ravenna, but soon after entered the monastery

of Fonte Avellana in Umbria, became Abbot of the monastery, and later Cardinal Bishop of Ostia. In later years he retired to the monastery and led an austere and contemplative life, the following descriptions of which Dante makes him utter:

> "There I of old
> So strong became in God's blest ministry,
> That, or in summer's heat or winter's cold,
> The juice of olives was my only fare,
> Content with contemplations manifold."

It was there that he gave expression to his religious ecstasy in the form of hymns of real poetical beauty, such as the hymn *De Gloria Paradisi*, and there too he wrote some famous treatises on the relation between the spiritual and temporal power.

Page 243. *Abbot Joachim de Flora* (1130–1202).—He escaped from the temptations of the gay court of Naples, where his father held office, and resolved to give himself up to monastic life. First he determined to visit the Holy Land, and while there he went to Mount Tabor. There he lived for forty days in an old cistern, and during his contemplation on the scene of the Transfiguration he conceived the idea of his principal writings. On his return to Italy, Joachim became Abbot of a Cistercian monastery in Calabria, but he soon withdrew to the monastery of Flora, where he passed the remainder of his life in study and contemplation. After his death he was, on the one side, received as a saint and prophet, inaugurating the new period of the Church's history in which she was to be under the immediate guidance of the Spirit, and, on the other, denounced as a heretic. His *Everlasting Gospel*, which was believed to embody his revelations,

was a source of inspiration to the seceding Spiritual Franciscans known as the Fraticelli, and as such was condemned by Boniface VIII.

Page 244. *Bossuet* (1627–1704), a celebrated French bishop and pulpit orator. After a varied career as preacher and tutor to the Dauphin, he was made Bishop of Meaux, where he completed his long interrupted works on historical controversy and wrote many spiritual letters. He took care of his religious communities and composed for them *Meditations on the Gospel* and the *Uplifting of the Soul on the Mysteries.* In the later period of his life he strove to realise his early ambition of reconciling Protestantism and Catholicism, and with this aim he carried on a series of controversies.

Page 245. Jacopone, *Poesie Spirituali,* lib. i., sat. 1, sat. 10, sat. 18, sat. 8; *cf.* Peter Damien, *Liber inscriptus Dominus vobiscum,* chap. i.

Page 246. Jacopone, *Poesie Spirituali,* lib. ii. 9, 11.

Page 249. Jacopone, lib. v. 15; *ibid.,* 23, stanza 11:

> "O lacrima, con grazia gran forza hai:
> Tuo è lo regno, et tua è la potenza.
> Sola davanti al giudice ne vai,
> Ne ti arresta da ciò nulla temenza," &c.

These beautiful lines recall a wonderful passage of St. Peter Damien's on the power of tears (*De perfectione monachorum,* chap. xii.):

"Lacrymae porro quae a Deo sunt, divinae exauditionis tribunal fiducialiter adeunt, et impetrantes praesto quod petunt, de peccatorum nostrorum certa remissione confidunt. Lacrymae sunt in foederanda inter Deum et

homines pace sequestres, et veraces sunt atque doctissimae in qualibet humanae ignorantiae dubietate magistrae."

OZANAM.

Page 249. St. Bernard treats the symbolism of Jacob's Ladder at some length in his *Liber de modo bene vivendi, 53. De activa et contemplativa vita,* in which he writes:

"On this ladder are placed all the predestined to eternal life, and every one who looks for the Kingdom of Heaven has a place upon it. This ladder in general is the Church, which partly is still militant on earth and partly already reigns in the heavens. Upon it are three orders of men, worthy, active, contemplative. At the foot of the ladder are the worldly, they who go round about the earth, who seek and love earthly things; in the middle of the ladder are the active, they who cultivate the earth, who sow the word of God in the ears of men; on the summit of the ladder are the contemplative, they who despise earthly things and are already almost in heaven since they dwell in thought amongst heavenly things. These are as the Angels of God, ascending and descending by the ladder, for they ascend through contemplation to God and descend through compassion to their neighbours."

See also the "Interpretation of the Mystical Stair of Divine Love as set forth by St. Bernard and St. Thomas." *The Dark Night of the Soul,* by St. John of the Cross.

Page 249. Jacopone, iv. 33:

"Udite una tenzone
Ch'e fra l'anima e 'l corpo."

Page 250. Jacopone ii. 31, 26; v. 23, stanzas 19–22. *Cf.* St. Bernard, *De scala claustralium.*

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

Page 251. "By *Poverty* the mystic means an utter self-stripping, the casting off of immaterial as well as material wealth, a complete detachment from all finite things."—*Mysticism,* EVELYN UNDERHILL.

Cf. *Mystic Theology,* St. Dionysius: "By the resistless and absolute ecstasy in all purity from thyself and all, thou wilt be carried on high, to the superessential ray of the Divine darkness, when thou hast cast away all and become free from all."

Page 252. *The Nothing.*—"A gloom veritably mystic, within which he (the mystic) closes all perceptions of knowledge and enters into the altogether impalpable and unseen, being wholly of Him Who is beyond all, and of none, neither himself nor other: and by inactivity of all knowledge, united in his better part to the altogether Unknown, and by knowing nothing, knowing above mind. . . .

"The mystic must leave behind all things both in the sensible and in the intelligible worlds, till he enters into the darkness of the nescience that is truly mystical."

ST. DIONYSIUS.

Page 252. "The Light of Lights, He is in the heart of the dark shining eternally."—*Bhagavad Gita.*

Page 252. "The activity of the mind is lulled to rest"; wrapped in God, it can no longer find itself. . . . Being so deeply engulfed in that ocean now it can find no place to issue therefrom. Of itself it cannot think, nor can it say what it is like; because, transformed, it hath another vesture. All its perceptions have gone forth to gaze upon the Good, and contemplate that Beauty which has no likeness. The doors are flung wide; conjoined to God, it possesses all that is in Him. It feels that which it felt

not; sees that which it knew not, possesses that which it believed not, tastes, though it savours not. Because it is wholly lost to itself, it possesses that height of Unmeasured Perfection. Because it has not retained in itself the mixture of any other thing, it has received in abundance that Imageless Good."—*Lauda* xci.

JACOPONE DA TODI.

(Translated by E. UNDERHILL.)

Page 253. Jacopone, ii. 23, 20; v. 34; vii. 19; v. 23, stanza 18:

"Quando tu fossi poi piu alto salita,
Allor ti guarda piu di non cadere."

Page 253. Jacopone, ii. 20:

"De l'inferno non temere,
Ne del cielo speme avere."

Ibid., ii. 26:

"Dimandai à Dio l'inferno,
Lui amando e me perdendo."

Here was to be traced all the ideas roused by the controversy between Bossuet and Fénelon on the subject of Quietism. In particular, see Bossuet's *Instructions sur les états d'oraison*, Bk. III. The poet's expressions do not make clear to us whether this annihilation, in which all fear and hope vanish away, is for him a passing state, or rather a lasting and definite one; in which case it would constitute one of the errors condemned in the *Maximes des Saints*. As a matter of fact the question was not raised in his day as it has since been, and therefore it is not surprising if he did not solve it in terms of orthodox theology. OZANAM.

Page 254. Ryanaldus, *Annales eccles. contin.*, ad ann.

1294, 1297, 1311, 1312; Muratori, *Scriptores Rev. Italic.*, iv.; *Historia Dulcini heresiarchae;* Wadding, *Annales*, ad ann. 1297. OZANAM.

Page 354. *Fraticelli.*—A name given to various heretical sects which appeared in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, principally in Italy, who separated from the Franciscan order on account of disputes concerning poverty. For a time they constituted a serious danger to the Roman Church, but a series of repressive measures in the fifteenth century struck at the very vitals of the sect. A circular letter which they addressed to all Christendom proved ineffectual and their doom was sealed.

Page 254. *Beghards.*—The Beghards or Brothers of the Free Spirit were laymen, and not bound by vows. They were for the most part of humble origin—weavers, dyers, &c.—and so, being intimately connected with the city craft-guilds, they were able to influence largely the religious life of the towns. It is not surprising that, as they were uncontrolled by ecclesiastical authority, they should after a time develop opinions not in harmony with the Catholic faith, and the heretical tendencies of the Beghards were repeatedly condemned by the Holy See during the fourteenth century. An echo of their theological errors is found in the doctrine of Quietism.

Page 254. Refer back to Joachim de Flora, p. 306; also to St. Bonaventura, p. 125.

Page 255. Jacopone, Bk. v. 23, stanzas 18, 32, 52, st. 8:

"Vuol d'amor che cosi sia,
Che noi stiam contenti al quia;
Na imperó che tutta via
Noi ne sforziamo di fare."

It may be observed that Dante was to reproduce the same expression :

"Be ye content, O men, to keep in sight what is."

Bk. v. 1 : "Amore Contrafatto.
Spogliato di virtute."

At times the songs of Jacopone recall the most beautiful pages of the *Imitation*. For example, when he gives to the soul two wings with which to soar to God—namely, the chastity of the heart and the purity of the intelligence (Bk. v. 35)—the following passage is suggested : "By two wings, a man is lifted up from things earthly, namely, by Simplicity and Purity. Simplicity ought to be our intention ; Purity in our affections ; Simplicity doth tend towards God ; Purity doth apprehend and, as it were, taste Him." The following is Corneille's beautiful interpretation :

"Pour t'élever de terre, homme, il te faut deux ailes,
La pureté du cœur et la simplicité ;
Elles te porteront avec facilité
Jusqu'à l'abîme heureux des clartés éternelles."
Imitation, Bk. II. chap. iv.

Page 256. Jacopone, Bk. v. 23 ; Bk. iv. 33 ; Bk. ii. 14 :

"Anima che desideri
D'andare a paradiso."

Page 257. Jacopone, Bk. ii. 2 :

"L'uomo fu creato virtuoso ;
Volsevo disprezzar par sua follia ;
Il cadimento fu pericoloso,
La luce fu tornata in tenebria :

Il risalire posto e fatigoso;
A chi nol vede par grande follia,
A chi lo passa pargli glorioso,
E paradiso sente in queste via."

Page 261. *Prudentius.*—See p. 44.

Page 262. *Calderon,* a renowned Spanish dramatist of the seventeenth century, wrote a number of spiritual allegories called *Autos* which may be regarded, as in part at least, historical, and the best known of which are "The Divine Orpheus," "The Devotion to the Mass," and "The Captivity of the Ark." The *Autos Sacramentales* (sacred allegorical dramas on the Eucharist) were always presented in the streets in connection with the celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi (Calderon, *la Nave del Mercader, la primer flor del Carmelo*).

Page 265. Jacopone, Bk. iv. 6.

Page 266. *Albigensian heresy.*—The Albigenses (so called from Albi in Languedoc, which was at one period their rallying-place) repudiated the authority of ecclesiastical tradition, circulated Scripture in the vernacular as the only rule of faith, and rejected transubstantiation, purgatory, masses for the dead, adoration of images, and invocation of saints.

Page 266. *Averrhoës,* "who the far-famed *Comment.* wrote," was an Arabian metaphysician and philosopher of the twelfth century, whose commentary on Aristotle was from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century the great text-book of all European universities.

Page 266. *Ugolino.*—See p. 109.

Page 266. *Eccelino the Cruel.*—See p. 109.

Page 267. St. Bernard considered it his duty to send an apology to the Pope, and it is inserted in the second part of his *Book of Consideration*. There he explains how, with the Crusaders as with the Hebrew people, in whose favour the Lord had multiplied His prodigies, their sins were the cause of their misfortunes and miseries.

Page 268. The following are a few stanzas from a canticle on the "Contemplation against Pride," consisting of a gruesome conversation between the dead and sepulchred bones and Jacopone:

1. When thou takest thy delight,
O worldly man of wealth and might,
Turn, turn thy mind unto the tomb,
And hither let thy footsteps come.
Bethink thee well that thou must turn
Unto like dust as in this urn,
To ashes such as thou dost spurn.

2. O answer me, thou buried one,
Now rapt away from sky and sun,
Where are the garments thou didst wear?
For now foul rags alone are there.

3. O brother mine, it pains me not
That thou enquirest of my lot,
Since I am stripped of all I wore,
And for my covering nothing more
Than dust and ashes can I boast.

4. O where is now the head that most
Thou cherishedest—what has so marred
Its form as if with flame 'twere scarred?
Could ever sight more painful be?

5. From this my head, once fair to see,
Gone all the flesh, fallen all the hair;
I never dreamt in upper air
That I such misery could bear.

6. And where are now thy vanished eyes?
From out their sockets, I surmise,
The worms have eaten them, nor feared
Thine anger when their prey they neared.

7. Lost are they, servants to my sin,
O woe is me, without, within,
O woe is me, now know I well
My flesh devoured, my soul in Hell!"

From an article in the "Quarterly Review."

Jacopone, iv. 10:

"Quando t'alegri, o huomo, di altura,
Va, poni mente a la sepoltura."

Page 268. Jacopone, iv. 12:

"O signor Christo pietoso.
Deh perdona il mio peccato."

Page 270. Benevento d'Imola, Comment. to canto 23 of the "Purgatorio": "Nam nulli artifices in mundo habent tam varia organa et diversa instrumenta; et subtilia argumenta pro artificio suae artis, sicut mulieres florentinae pro cultu suae personnae." OZANAM.

Page 270. Jacopone, i. 6.

Page 271. *Francesca da Rimini*, daughter of the Lord of Ravenna who was at war with Malatesta, Lord of Rimini. In order to reconcile the two families a marriage was arranged between Francesca and Gianciotto, the deformed elder son of Malatesta. As was often the custom in those times, Paolo, the beautiful younger

brother of Gianciotto, was sent to Ravenna as his proxy in the betrothal. Francesca, who thought that Paolo was to be her future husband, fell in love with him. She was undeceived when she arrived at Rimini, but her passion for Paolo continued. The jealousy of her husband was roused, and finding the young lovers together he put them to death with his own hand.

This pathetic story is told by Dante in the "Inferno," canto v.

Page 271. *The Fathers of the Desert.*—See page 107.

Page 273. Jacopone, iv. 36; i. 9.

Cf. St. Bernard, *Ad Guglielmum abbatem;* St. Peter Damien, *Opusc,* xxxi. chap. vi; Muratori, *Antiquit. italic.,* t. ii. p. 310:

"Ditari cupiunt, ut turritae dapibus lances indica pigmenta redoleant, ut in cristallinis vasculis adulterata mille vina flavescant, ut quocumque veniunt, praesto cubiculum operosis et mirabiliter textis cortinarum phaleris induant, sicque parietes domus ab oculis intuentium tamquam sepeliendum cadaver involvunt." OZANAM.

"Cephas and he, the Spirit's vessel true
And chosen, barefoot went and mortified,
And ate what food chance hostel to them threw.
Our modern shepherds need on either side
An arm to lead them and strong back to bear
So weighty they!—and one their train to guide;
And with their palfreys they their mantles share,
And so two beasts go underneath one skin:
O patience, that, this seeing, canst forbear!"
"Par.," xxx. 127–135.

Page 274. *Luca Signorelli* (1441–1532), the "Dante of fifteenth-century painting," was trained under Piero della

Francesca. His work is characterised by the vigour and power of draughtsmanship and was one of the influences which moulded the genius of Michael Angelo. His "End of the World" in the Cathedral of Orvieto presages Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment" in the Sistine Chapel.

Page 275. Jacopone, iv. 14.

Page 276. Muratori, *Antiquit. ital.*, t. ii. dissertat. 29; *De spectaculis et ludis publicis medii aevi.*

Page 276. Jacopone, Bk. iii. 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 16, 18.

Page 276. At Easter of the year 1244 the Passion and Resurrection of Christ was performed in Padua, in the Prato della Valle in the open air. Like all the early mystery plays, this was most probably written in Latin, as were also the cycle of mystery plays performed by priests in Friuli on three consecutive days in 1298 and 1303, the subject of which was the creation of the first man, the Annunciation, the Birth of Christ, the Passion, and the Resurrection, the Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Ghost, the coming of the Antichrist, and that of Christ for the Last Judgment. The first representations in the Italian language are those of the Umbrian *Laudesi.* These *laude* were the popular sacred songs which took the place of the Latin Church hymn, which was no longer intelligible to the people. Many of these were written in the form of dialogues, and thus paved the way for the drama. And the transition from the *lauda* in dialogue form that was merely sung to dramatic representation was actually achieved by the fraternities of the Disciplinati. It may even be that the dialogues of Jacopone were intended for performance.

Page 276. *Nativity*—

"Sure ne'er hath been,
Such court'sy seen
'Mong mortal men. To-day
The Omnipotent
His only Son hath sent,
Our ransom for to pay.
Now, since He's here,
Show your heart's cheer,
And high content.
Feasting is meet
The little King to greet,
That's come with us to stay,
Give now your thought and care
Prepare, prepare;
Make ready for your guest.
With finest bread
His table must be spread,
And all your best,
Sweep hearth and floor;
Be all your vessels' store
Shining and clean.
Then bring the little guest
And give Him of your best
Of meat and drink. Yet more
Ye owe than meat.
One gift at your King's feet
Lay now. I mean
A heart full to the brim
Of love, and all for Him,
And from all envy clear."

(From the translation by Miss MACDONELL in *Sons of Francis.*)

"The little angels join their hands
And dance in holy ring.
Love-songs they're whispering,
The little angel bands.

Good men and bad they call and greet:
High Glory doffs its crown,
And has come down,
Low lies there at your feet.

Now, shamefaced boors, why keep
Ye back? Show courtesie.
Hasten and ye will see
The little Jesus sleep.

The earth and all the skiey space
Break into flowery smiles.
So draws and so beguiles
The sweetness of His face. . . ."

(Translated by Miss MACDONELL in *Sons of Francis.*)

Page 277. TO SAINT CLARE

1. Maiden of light unstained,
Who from the holy rood
Ere ever thou wert born
Wert surely foreordained
Unto thy mother's sanctitude,
To be unto thy following a splendid dawn.

2. Thou raisedst up a fire
In the Assisian land,
A mirror wert and fount of bitter ruth,

Wert after Francis chief
Of all Christ's blessed choir,
To bring forth fruit of utter sufferance
With lowlihead wert lief,
And steadfast abstinence
Thy body to withstand;
Upon the rood thou nailedst all desire,
So art become a burning flame of truth.

3. In heart the earnest didst bear
Of God's great heritage;
Spirit and truth He gave to thee in dower,
Of fame thou hadst no care
Nor of thy virtue's wage.
He folded thee in so deep lowlihead,
His consecrating balm.
Thy soul did thus o'erpower,
That thou mightest win the palm,
Upon the devils and the flesh to tread
And scorn the guileful world and her great snare.

4. While yet thou wast a child,
A penitent's rough wear
Thou didst conceal beneath thy rich array
To keep thy body pure,
Thy flesh tender and mild
To penances austere thou didst enure;
Thou atest not thy share,
But fain wouldst it convey
To the needy and outcast,
And secretly the Heavenly Father pray
In purity to keep thy heart steadfast.

5. Thou wouldst not a spouse
On earth that is unsure,
Thou didst betrothe thyself to God above
With Christ's Almighty Name,
And Francis he filled thee,
Whom he in utter charity did house,
And often did arouse
And set thy soul aflame,
All hardship to endure,
If haply mightst keep chastity and love.

6. Such warning admonition
Thou hast from Francis taken,
That purposest in hardness aye to dwell;
Such an heart's renewal
He in thee did waken
That none adversity could thee repel.
Thy freedom hast forsaken,
And in blessed contrition
Into the desert cruel
Unto Our Lady with thine own art fled,
For ever thy Redeemer Christ to wed.

7. When he thine hair had shorn
And doffed thy robe of vair,
He clad thee in a dress of sackcloth drear
And did with God imbue,
And in the life divine
Set thee to show the world a pathway new.
Agnes, thy sister fair
And holy, did not scorn
With thee to persevere;
The Lord a new folk did to thee assign,
That ever should thy discipline ensue.

8. On logs or earth thy station
And vigil thou didst hold,
Oft on a faggot thou didst lie awake;
A pricking shirt of hair
Upon thy skin didst wear,
A cilice didst beneath thy vesture take;
Pain unto thee is rapture
If it detachment capture;
To blessed contemplation
In such devotion Christ did thee enfold
That ever wert consumed for His sake.

9. From when to thee men gave
The governance supreme,
Thou didst thee in such lowliness refrain;
No abhess thou didst seem,
But to thy nuns a thrall;
So equally thou servedst unto all,
In hardness thou didst dwell.
The faith thou so didst save
Which thou didst erst maintain
The Pope thou even besoughtest to recall
His offer, lest thy fervour it should quell.

10. Thy sisters didst redeem
From all their saintly need,
Nor didst thou suffer them to suffer lack;
Full fifty had enough,
With one loaf didst them feed,
And of thy largess oil on them bestow.
O hallowed maidenhood,
In whose thorny track
Nought to thee was rough,
By abstinence the body hast withstood,
Nor ought in penance didst thou pain esteem.

11. The passion so didst weep
Of Christ upon the rood,
That with Him thou didst likewise seem to waste.
In pity so profound
Thou didst thy spirit steep,
That oft thou seemedst from this world to swound
Thy soul without alloy
So deeply seemed to taste
Of His great mansuetude,
That weakness was to thee a thing of joy
If whole thereby thou mightst thy sisters keep.

12. With prayer the embattled foe
From Assisi hast stayed,
Hast put to flight the emperor and his host,
To Christ has told their boast
Thy convent to assail.
With Him upon the threshold thou didst wail,
Such fear on them was laid
That they fell back dismayed
That stood within the pale;
Right soon their boastful pride thou hast brought low
Nor tumult ever passed within the gate.

13. Didst quell for years two score,
With austere fortitude,
The flesh till it to utter weakness drooped,
Then Christ delayed no more
Thine harvest of renown,
Whereto the seed of holy life was laid.
By thee Our Lady stood,
O'er thee with saints she stooped
To set on thee a crown,
And tire thee in the robe of sanctitude
Wert with all hallows in one hue arrayed.

14. Thy women sore lament thee,
Behold thy sister sighs,
A child she did in thee a mother gain.
Since thou, in death arisen,
Hast left thy fleshly prison,
She would recall thee to this world of pain.
The Father now hath sent thee
Unto the best above.
As thou didst prophesy,
Thou didst her in the heavenly life sustain
With thee absorbed in everlasting love.

15. Thy spiritual daughters,
Of thy presence bereaven,
Thy promised intercession doth console;
Many, as was God's pleasure,
From all folk under Heaven,
Of all infirmity hast rendered whole;
Of Grace hadst thou such treasure.
While yet on earth thy soul,
Christ's Vicar gave thee greeting,
And when thou leftest this thy vesture fleeting,
Rome's Court set thee as blessed upon her altars.

16. O Virgin, starry-bright
Within the Heavenly Halls,
Memorial make for us that dwell in sin.
Thou, Agnes, maiden white,
The King of Glory pray
That over our three foes we conquest win.
O let us feel alway
That Love whereto the zeal
Of Holy Francis calls,

And doth to the Supper of the Lamb invite
The taste whereof shall every sorrow heal.

Translated by J. SLINGSBY ROBERTS.

Page 277. Jacopone, Bk. iii. 12.

Page 282. Jacopone, Bk. ii. 4:

"Dolce amor povertade,
Quanto ti degiamo amare!
Povertade poverella,
Umiltade è tua sorella;
Ben ti basta la scodella
E al bere e al mangiare."

This and other compositions of Jacopone have been published by Chavin de Malan in the supplement to his *Histoire de Saint François d'Assise.* OZANAM.

Page 284. The words of St. Francis himself clearly explain the attitude of the Brothers towards alms-giving and work: ". . . If needs be, let them go begging for alms, neither be ashamed therefor, but rather call to mind that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living and omnipotent God, did set His face as the hardest stone, nor did show shame, but was poor and a stranger and lived on alms, both He and the Blessed Virgin and His disciples. And when men shall shame them and refuse them alms, let them give thanks to God, for of such shame they shall receive great honour before the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ. And let them know that the shame shall be imputed not to those who suffer it, but to those who offer it. For alms are the inheritance and the justice owing to the poor, brought for us by Jesus Christ. . . . I worked with my hands, and still

will work; and my strong desire is that all the other brothers carry on some honest trade. Let those who know none learn one, not for greed of the price of their labour, but for a good example and the prevention of indolence. And when we are given no hire for our labour, let us betake ourselves to the table of the Lord, begging alms from door to door."

Words of Francis. (Translated by ANNE MACDONELL.)

Page 286. Wadding, *Script. ord. Minor.*, p. 366, quotes several manuscripts of Jacopone preserved in the libraries of Rome, Assisi, and Seville. To these may be added two manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale: (1) a small one in octavo, in excellent writing, which belonged formerly to the great sculptor Luca della Robbia; (2) in octavo, of a larger size, and in less good a writing.

The chief edition, printed by Bonaccorsi, appeared in Florence on September 28, 1490. The following are other editions mentioned by Wadding:

Florence, Bonaccorsi, 1540; Rome, Salviani, 1558; Naples, Lazaro Scorrigia, 1615; Venice, 1514; *ibid.*, 1556; *ibid.*, Misserini, 1617. Wadding also quotes a Bolognese edition of which he gives no date. Some of the poems of Jacopone appeared in the Appendix to the *Mystic Theology* of St. Bonaventura, published by Tempesti, Lucca, 1746. The Accademia della Crusca has placed the poems of Jacopone among the *testi di lingua.* OZANAM.

N.B.—The Bonaccorsi edition of 1490 is now in the Riccardi Library at Florence. EDITOR'S NOTE.

Page 286. Wadding, *ibid.* The Spanish translation appeared in Lisbon in 1576.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

Page 286. The manuscript (1) in the Bibliothèque Nationale contains ninety poems; the manuscript (2) contains 115 poems; the Bonaccorsi edition of 1490 has 102; that of Venice (1617), which I have employed, includes no less than 211. Among this number are two canticles attributed by St. Bernardino of Siena to St. Francis:

"Amor dè caritate.
In foco l'amor mi mise."

Wadding quotes a manuscript in the library at Chigi which includes, with some of Jacopone's poems, those of Ugo de Prato, surnamed della Panciera, a missionary in Tartary about the year 1307, who died about 1330.

OZANAM.

Page 291. "O signor, per cortesia,
Mandami la malsania.
A me la freve quartana,
La continua e la terzana,
La doppia cottidiana,
Colla grande idropesia.
A me venga mal de dente,
Mal de capo e mal de ventre,
A lo stomaco dolor pungente
E'n canna la squimanzia. . . ."

Page 288. *Orcagna.*—See p. 180.

Page 294. *Dante's use of the vernacular.*—See *Convivio*, treatise 1, chap. x.

Page 296. "Some half-century after the poet's death we come across a tradition that Dante in his youth entered the Franciscan order and wore the dress of it

for a time, but left it before the end of his novitiate. This is the story told by the commentator Francesco da Buti, who was born only three years after Dante's death, and he relates it as a genuine and undoubted fact, or rather he never does relate the fact, he simply alludes to it as something well known to his hearers, of which they only need to be reminded. Landino also mentions it, but only as a thing which 'some say.' Father Antonio Tognocchi, without more ado, reckons Dante among the writers belonging to the Franciscan order. The Franciscans have never ceased to count him among their members, and, as we have seen, he found his grave with them in the Lady-chapel of the Franciscan church of San Piero Maggiore. In his own works we find two allusions. He relates, in *Conv.*, ii. 13, that after the death of Beatrice he frequented the schools of the religious, meaning no doubt the convent schools. In 'Inf.,' xvi. 106, we read, 'I had a cord which round my waist I wore.' This cord cannot be the leather girdle which was worn at that time, it can only be that which was borne by the followers of St. Francis."—SCARTAZZINI.

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